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THE RAMBLES OF THE EMPEROR CHING TĬH IN KËANG NAN.

A CHINESE TALE.

TRANSLATED BY
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WITH A PREFACE
BY JAMES LEGGE, D.D.
PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE.

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Mr.
Henry Byron Phillips

THE RAMBLES

OF THE

EMPEROR CHING TĬH,

ETC.

CHAPTER I.

"How foolishly in schemes and plans,
The life of man is spent!
When at the last a little earth
Makes rich and poor content.
Let us seize the time of pleasure,
Quickly as it flies along;
When the wind of fortune blows,
Gaily sail with mirth and song."

In the commencement of the great Ming dynasty, when Hung Woo occupied the throne, the barbarians were all submissive, and the people enjoyed the blessings of repose. The line of succession continued regularly from him for several reigns, during which the empire remained secure, and the fate of the dynasty seemed to be permanent.

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In process of time, the throne came to Hung Che, the third son of the emperor Hèèn Tsung. He reigned for the space of eighteen years, the people being flourishing, resources of every kind abundant, and the whole empire reverent to his authority. His queen Chang brought him a son, named How Chaou, who was of the age of fifteen at the time our story commences. In the first month of autumn that year, Hung Che fell sick, and got daily worse, notwithstanding the chief physician was called in and prescribed medicine several times. Fearing he should not recover, the Emperor ordered the Eunuchs of the inner palace to summon among others the following great officers to the palace to receive his orders. First, Leang Choo, high chancellor of Kin Shin Hall. He was from Shun Tĭh hèèn of Kwang Chow foo, in Kwang Tung province; and before entering upon office had been chief of the graduates of the third degree. Next, Yang Ting Ho, high chancellor of Looo Ying Hall. He was from Tsing Keang hèèn, of Lin Keang foo, in Keang Se province; and before entering on

office, had gained the second place among the Literati. Third, Low Kèèn, high chancellor of Wan Hwa Hall. He was from Hwae Ning hèèn, of Chin Chow foo, in Ho Nan province, and before entering on office had gained the highest literary place. Next to him, Seay Ts'een, high chancellor of Wan Yèèn Hall. He was from Yang Keuk hèèn, of T'ae Yuen foo, in Shan Se province, and before entering on office had reached the rank of Han Lin.

These and the other officers, on receiving the message, repaired to the imperial couch, and having first performed their homage, inquired after his majesty's health. They then asked on what business he had called them to the palace. The Emperor replied, "I have called you simply on account of my sickness, which has become exceedingly dangerous, and affected my vitals. The chief physician has often seen me and prescribed for me, but without success. On the contrary, the disease grows every day more grievous, so that I fear I must ere long die, when it will be impossible for me to meet you here again. It is true

that the length and shortness of life are determined by fate, which cannot be reversed by the strength of man; but my anxiety on account of the future condition of the empire is exceedingly great. When I think of it how is my heart troubled! I have therefore called you, my nobles, to the palace that I may intrust you with the care of the public interests after my decease. The prince, my heir, is now fifteen years old. Though he is endowed with considerable intelligence, I fear that he is unacquainted with the government in consequence of his youth; and being also of an open and free disposition, self-conceited, indolent, and fond of wandering, there is a danger that, after his accession to the throne, he may fall a prey to the seductions of mean persons. I wish you, therefore, all to exert your abilities for his assistance, and help him with righteousness. Should his virtue prove deficient, you must strenuously exert yourselves, and with one heart and upright words lay your reproofs before him, and display to him the good path. I beseech you not to shrink from the toil, nor to

frustrate the important charge which I commit to you this day. Thus shall the days after my death be as the years of my life."

When he ceased, the tears involuntarily ran down his royal garments, and all the officers bowed their heads to the earth, and answered: "We hope our lord will be careful of his royal person, and not give way to this anxiety. As to the care of your orphan son, with which you intrust us, it is our duty as servants to attend to it. We dare not but exert the strength both of our minds and bodies, if peradventure we may recompense the thousandth part of your kindness."

On hearing these words the sorrow of the Emperor was instantly converted into joy, and, with a smiling countenance, he exclaimed: "Only let my nobles act in this way, and though I go to the yellow stream, I shall have no regrets!" He then ordered Leang Choo to write his will for him, and having properly arranged the business of his successor, and all other public matters, he

dismissed the officers to their several places of abode.

Next day he died at the early age of thirty-six. Leang Choo and the other great ministers, on hearing that he had ascended to the clouds, with the quickness of fire conducted all the officers to the palace, announced the event to the empress Chang, and then, holding up the will, surrounded How Chaou in a body, and raised him to the throne. He forthwith bestowed on the late Emperor the posthumous title of Haou Tsung, the reverent emperor, and conferred on his mother Chang the rank of Empress-dowager. He changed the year also, entitling it the first of Ching Tĭh, and proclaimed a general pardon throughout the empire.

The officers were all promoted and rewarded, and instantly offered their congratulations and thanks. This done, they proceeded to the ceremonies for the dead, and put on mourning garments. The young Emperor, according to the regulations, gave himself to the study of the rites within the palace, having entrusted the management

of the court and the public business for the meantime to Leang Choo and the others. A notification of Hung Che's death, written in black, was issued to the whole empire, causing the voice of music all within the four seas to cease.

Quickly the flowing light went round, and three years, the period of mourning, were completed. Leang Choo and the other ministers immediately conducted all the officers to the palace, and besought his majesty to visit the court and inspect the state of affairs. Their representation was accepted; but the Emperor continued that day to wear the mourning robes, and sacrificed to the former sovereign.

Next day, about the middle of the fifth watch, he assumed the imperial robes, and proceeded to the Hall of Audience, to receive the homage of the civil and military officers. After the ceremonies were over, he spread for them a feast in the court, to which they proceeded in ranks, having first expressed their thanks. The golden bottles were being joyfully inverted, when, after the wine had gone round several times, the

new monarch issued his silken sounds and said: "I feel grateful to the late Emperor for his care in entrusting to you, nobles, the charge of protecting my accession to the throne. It is my duty at once to take upon myself the administration, and to add my new sanction to the principles of the government. But my years are few, and I am afraid that there are a thousand intricacies in the public business which render it difficult to direct. If I shall commit errors, you, my nobles, must exert your strength, and with one heart yield me your assistance. You must show yourselves useful as oars or salt or prunes in correspondency with the titles which you bear of members and vitals. Thus shall it be seen that the praise of worthiness and faithfulness is not due only to the court of Yu." The officers replied with one voice: "The words of his late majesty are still in our ears. We dare not but exert ourselves to the utmost to recompense your kindness in condescending to us. We trust our Lord will vouchsafe to us his heavenly audience, and then in the matters which devolve upon us

we shall every one employ his weak sincerity to prepare them for your majesty's decision." The Emperor joyfully observed: "Let my nobles thus display their energies, and it will comfort the soul of his late majesty in heaven, as well as increase the enjoyment of repose in the court, and throughout the kingdom. To proceed to business. There are Shan Se and the neighbouring districts, the most important parts of the empire. I have been informed that his late majesty was always anxious about them, and I now wish to send a good officer thither to act as protector-general. Consult ye together as to what man is worthy of this office."

Upon this Leang Choo, advancing from his rank, addressed his majesty, saying: "The present vice-president of the board of war, Yang Yĭh Ts'ing is from Kwang Yuen hèên, of Paou Ning foo, in Il Ch'uen province, and before he entered upon office gained the third place among the literati. He is possessed of much knowledge, and is fruitful in schemes; he is endowed too with consummate talents, just fit for this office.

pleased with nothing but wine and women. Seeing that it would be impossible for him during the time of mourning to establish an empress, he completely lost his spirits. Lew Kin being in attendance was ever on the watch to discover the cause of his sorrow, and the Emperor also intimated to him his feelings. Upon this the eunuch ordered one Yung Shing and some more of his partisans to select from among the people four beautiful and accomplished women, whom they were to instruct in various improper arts, in the sport of variegated garments, and in all sorts of music. They were then to introduce them in a small carriage, under cover of night, into the palace, and conduct them to an apartment where the Emperor might feast and enjoy himself among them day and night.

Nothing could exceed the joy of the young monarch. He instantly formed the intention to promote Lew Kin, and accordingly, as soon as he held a court, he conferred on him the above honours. The officers were already slightly acquainted with the eunuch's deceiving the royal mind, and

when they saw him advanced now to such important offices, they felt all dissatisfied; but as it was the first occasion on which the golden mouth had been opened, they felt it impossible to remonstrate; so they betook themselves again to the pearly wine, and pleasantly drank.

In a little time they concluded the feast, and expressed their thanks to the Emperor, who returned to the palace, while they separated to their several dwellings—all but Leang Choo. This statesman having observed his majesty at the feast confer those important posts of authority on Lew Kin, and not being able to prevent him, felt uncomfortable in mind. The object of his solicitude was not so much Lew Kin himself, (for while he stood alone without many partisans, it would be easy to manage him,) but he had heard that he had become very intimate with the Lord Chin Haou, a member of the imperial family. This Haou was of a crafty, hypocritical, and deceitful disposition, as was known, not only to the officers of the court, but also to the young monarch himself, for he

had been told about him by his father. Observing that Lew Kin was a favourite of the Emperor, he contracted a friendship with him, that he might have him for a confederate in the palace in future emergencies. Thus the two men, being of one mind and one intention, agreed together as glue with varnish. All this was well known to Leang Choo, and now seeing the eunuch invested with great authority, he was afraid that they would practise their craftiness both within and without the court, and nourish some internal evil, which being furnished with arms and wings should one day burst upon the empire like a clap of thunder, against which the ears cannot be shut. He was anxious by previous measures to guard against such a calamity, and, therefore, during the feast cast the subject over and over in his mind. At last there occurred to him a plan; and, instead of retiring from the feast with the other officers, he silently turned his steps after the Emperor, and followed him to the outer court of the Yang hèèn quarter of the palace. He then with a low voice said,

"I beseech my Lord to stay for a little: his old servant has a secret matter to represent to him." Ching Tĭh turned his face, and seeing that it was Leang Choo, he said, "Old and beloved noble, what is the reason that you do not return to your house, but come again to the palace?" "I beseech you," said Choo, "to remove your attendants, and then I will speak plainly." The Emperor accordingly having ordered them to retire, inquired what business he had to consult him about. The minister observed, "It is said that internal changes spring from the royal house, and external troubles from the barbarians. I have carefully examined the conduct of the Lord Chin Haou, and, though he assumes the appearance of humility and respect, his real disposition is crafty and dangerous. He may not have the ambition of Tsaou Ts'aou, but he certainly follows the conduct of Wong Mang. While the late Emperor was alive he took continual precautions against him, and I am afraid that, should he reside long within the precincts of the court, he will pro-

bably rashly endeavour to carry into effect some of his improper views. This is the subject which I wish to bring to your notice, and I beseech you to think of it." "If you had not mentioned it," quickly replied his majesty, "I had nearly forgotten it." Thus

> "When once recalled to think of cares forgot,
> We start and feel as waking from a dream."

CHAP. II.

> "Wisdom not oft frequents the royal heart,
> And sovereigns seldom act the sage's part;
> Yet the true statesman thro' despite and death
> Will loyally expend his latest breath."

THE Emperor, having his own anxieties thus excited by the remarks of Leang Choo, eagerly inquired what plan he had thought of, which might be eligible in the circumstances.

"So far as I can form an opinion," replied the minister, "the best plan is to invest him with some military authority, and send him to protect some frontier territory, which seems to be important, but in reality is not so. This will prevent suspicions from arising in his mind, and afterwards you can appoint other trusty officers in his neighbourhood, who will keep him in check. This is the way to drive a tiger from the hill." The young monarch

felt delighted, and expressed his cordial approbation of the plan. He instantly passed a decree, appointing Chin Haou to be the commander of Oo Pĭh, and raised his title to that of Ting Kwŏ Kung,* ordering him the same day to set out for his government.

Part of the decree was expressed in the following terms: "This is an important and frontier district, which can be intrusted only to the care of an attached servant, and one who is a member of the royal family. I therefore commission my noble relative to proceed thither; hereafter I shall send other officers to share your toil. In the mean while you must be careful on entering upon the duties of your office. It is unnecessary for you to seek an interview with me before setting out. I have sent you some of my imperial wine as a parting gift, and have ordered all the officers to accompany you beyond the five gates of the court. Respect this; respect and honour!"

It was then given to one of the eunuchs,

* Kingdom-settler Duke.

the gentleman usher, to transmit to Chin Haou.

Leang Choo in laying this matter before the Emperor, while, it is true, he wished to guard against the improper schemes and actions of the nobleman, had Lew Kin principally in view, intending in this way to cut off his wings; but this secret anxiety his majesty of course could not know. The subject of the representation agreeing with his own views, he consequently adopted the minister's plan. The latter on his part, full of joy at his success, immediately took his leave, and returned home.

The gentleman usher, holding the imperial decree with both his hands, proceeded to the palace of Chin, and transmitted a message requesting him to come out and receive it. No sooner did my Lord hear this, than he was filled with terror, as if his soul left his body. Ignorant of the cause of the message, he had no resource but to arrange the incense table, and come out to receive the decree. Having knelt to the earth and performed

the ceremonies of audience, he took it into his hands and read it, after which he began to feel at ease.

> "The man who stedfastly pursues
> The path of honour bright
> Is not afraid, though knocking loud
> Rouse him at dark midnight."

Chin Kaou then inquired of the messenger who had recommended him to this office, but he replied that he did not know, and added, "Since you have received an imperial order, my Lord, you had better commence your journey without delay. I also am under orders from his majesty, which I am afraid will prevent me from taking the formal leave of you." With these words he left him, and returned to announce the execution of his commission.

The other then acquainted his family with the circumstance, and the same day made ready his baggage for the journey; and all the officers, on hearing the news, proceeded to the long portico to bring him on his way. The rest of them separated from him with a bow, but Lew Kin took hold of his sleeve as if he could not let him

go, and accompanied him a little farther. The two men mutually charged each other, and formed a very close engagement for their mutual protection and assistance, that in case any changes should occur, they would act with united resources and with one heart. It was not till they had again and again revolved the matter that they could bear to part.

Lew Kin, after his return to the palace, daily contrived by the help of seven men, who composed his party, schemes of amusement with horses, buffaloes, hawks, and hounds, with dancing, mirth, and music to delight the Emperor. They succeeded in teaching dogs to speak, horses to tread on swinging ropes, buffaloes to answer to the call, and hawks to transmit messages. They certainly accomplished wonders in this line, and not the young prince only was delighted with the exhibitions, but every one in the palace who saw them pronounced them to be surprising. The eunuch also caused several beautiful ladies to present wine, and sing, and practise every sort of seduction before his majesty, so as entirely

to concentrate his affections upon them, insomuch that he came to regard it unnecessary to hold a court, or to attend to the public business. Even representations, which were presented for his decision, he had neither inclination or leisure to look at.

The officers observing that his majesty had not attended the court for several days, and that the representations sent in to him had not been decided, reasoned over the matter tumultuously in the hall of audience. Some were afraid that it was owing to the Queen-dowager, who, on account of the Emperor's youth, did not wish to send him every morning to the court; others apprehended that his majesty might be ill, and had no time to attend to their representations. At last they determined to proceed to the palace in a body, and inquire about his health; but to their surprise on reaching the gate they saw the imperial tablet hung over it, with the two words, "No audience," written on it with vermilion; upon which, with doubting hearts and wondering what business could be carrying on, they retraced their steps.

Leang Choo, however, with Seay Ts'een and the others who had received the dying charge of Hung Che, were continually anxious about the welfare of the kingdom. Seeing Lew Kin daily within the palace, they were afraid he would bring on some calamity, and were ever on the watch to guard against him; and now that they were denied audience, they returned home, full of suspicion, but could come to no definite conclusion. They therefore sent some individuals to listen attentively about the palace for news of his majesty. These in a very short time brought them back word that the eunuch with his seven partisans was leading the Emperor astray by the exhibition of skilfully trained animals, with mirth, dancing, music, wine, and women. On hearing this they flew into a great rage, instantly assembled all the officers, and drew up the following remonstrance:

"Your servants venture to observe that the monarch is the fountain of government. To him the people look up. If he be intelligent, and his ministers faithful, the whole nation is happy; but if he be negli-

gent and his ministers crafty, the repose of the kingdom is destroyed. This principle ought to induce in you the greatest care. Now beauty is able to confound the will, and dissipation ruins the spirits: wine, indeed, is a heightener of joy, but it must be used with moderation. We have heard lately that our lord is abandoned to curious amusements and sunk in the love of pleasure, so that, not satisfied with the day, he prolongs his orgies through the night, — to the injury of his person, and the wasting of his health. We are not worthy to occupy our important offices, and we render our titles but empty designations; we are full of shame at not having heretofore assisted and corrected your majesty. But now that your decree has issued from the palace forbidding us to see you, and that the various documents transmitted for your decision have not been returned, your servants imagine that there must be some crafty individuals within the precincts of the palace, who contrive by curious schemes of amusement to detain your royal person among themselves; and that this is the reason why

the tablet, denying audience has been suspended before the palace, and your throne has been so long empty in the court. We cannot boast of such abilities as E Yin or Chow King, but your majesty is fit to be compared with Yu, Tung, Wan, and Woo, and we beseech you to inflict the proper punishment on these individuals, to serve as a warning to the future. Thus shall the nation speedily enjoy such happiness as can come from bright stars and fortunate clouds, with strength like that of mountains, and security which springs from encircling rivers. If your majesty thinks our statement correct, then act in compliance with our views; if you think it wrong, then publicly reprove us, and display the justice of your rewards and punishments, and your determination to fulfil the dictates of your understanding; but on no account detain this representation unanswered, as if beneath your notice. We believe your majesty is acquainted with the dying charge of the late emperor; we beseech you to take compassion upon us, and not allow us to be faithless both to him and

to you. It is in consequence of this that we take upon us to profane your royal audience with our mean statements. We pray you to render us happy by accepting our representations. While writing it our spirits are moving tumultuously, and our dread is extreme. Reverently presented."

When the memorial was finished, they gave it to the porter of the palace-gate, charging him to deliver it to the state-page, who should transmit it to his majesty. The page accordingly carried it into the palace, and presented it to the Emperor, whom it threw into great consternation and trouble. Lew Kin and the others being in attendance, and seeing him made thus uneasy by the perusal of the document, felt assured that it was a representation in which the officers had united against them, and were much afraid. Putting on, however, an unconcerned look, they inquired what it was about, and why it occasioned his majesty so much sorrow.

The Emperor then handed it to them, and having read it, they knelt down together, saying: "Your slaves were thinking what

could be the subject of it, and lo! it was only this, that the officers want to involve your majesty in trouble. Why should you be annoyed by it? As your majesty has not attended the hall of audience for several days, and the various representations have not been decided, they are afraid that business will accumulate until it will be difficult to manage, when your majesty may order them one day to undertake it, and they will find themselves involved in difficulties. On this account they make use of these upright words, and put on the appearance of faithful ministers, saying they are afraid you are neglecting the government, while in reality they are prompted by their own selfishness." Ching Tĭh observed, that this was just the cause of his anxiety. If they were afraid of trouble, why should not he be so. "Besides," said he, "my nature is indolent and retiring, and I am fond of pleasure; if they will cause me every day to hold a court, and to decide myself all the representations of the empire, then certainly, as you observe, they wish to involve me in trouble. Why!

among the ancient, worthy, and divine princes, the brightest exhibition of perfect government was afforded by Yaou, Shun, Yu, Tung, Wan, and Woo, yet these all entrusted the management of the various business of the empire to their ministers! It never was heard of that all should be devolved on the prince, so as to leave him no time to eat, while the ministers can take their meals in comfort. By this I see that these officers are no better than dead bodies or images. What good plan can you suggest to answer their manifesto?" The eunuchs upon this took the opportunity to reply, "that it was an old saying, 'that ministers who received the prince's pay should share the prince's cares.' This," they went on to observe, "is the simple duty of servants. But now these officers have no idea of reproving themselves, but turn round and reprove your majesty, who ought to be free from such rash remonstrances, seeing that you are the honourable lord of the empire. They thus display the height of unfaithfulness and disrespect, and are not fit to occupy the important

place of ministers. It is not worth while, however, to reprove them: your slaves have a plan here which will at once relieve your majesty's anxiety, and put them to shame; but we do not know whether you will allow us to lay it before you or not."

The Emperor said there could be no objections to hear this excellent plan. Lew Kin observed, "all of us eight men, your slaves, have long desired to show our fidelity to your majesty, and our gratitude to the kingdom, by sharing your toils: but without your gracious permission we dare not presume to undertake the duties. Our abilities are but ordinary, yet if you do not despise us, appoint us to the oversight of the ceremonies, to the government of all the military camps, and to the management of the manifestos from all parts of the empire. Thus your slaves, judging and deciding for your majesty, will be able at once to save you from trouble, and to free the ministers from anxiety. When you go to the court to-morrow at the fifth watch, wait until we shall have decided all their representations, and then tell them that you have appointed

us to the superintendence of all military movements, and of the various manifestos of the kingdom; and that from henceforth they need not trouble themselves, nor be anxious lest your majesty should neglect the government. This, I apprehend, will put them to shame for planning their own ease."

The Emperor was pleased, and expressed his approbation of the plan. He consequently appointed them to attend to these offices for a time, adding, that when he found an officer of ability he would devolve them upon him. "In all things," said he, "be careful." Upon this the eunuchs bowed their heads to the earth, and received the appointment, full of joy at the success of their plan. They immediately replied to the remonstrance of the officers in the following terms: "I comply with your requests, and to-morrow morning will hold a court. For the present I have intrusted the care of the administration and all public documents to the Lord Lew, so that hereafter you need not be afraid lest the government should be neglected."

The officers, on receiving this reply,

were much frightened; they lost their colour, stamped their feet, and said, "With the view of cutting off this thief, we presented our remonstrance. Who could think that his majesty is so darkened as to cherish him the more? We shall soon see the dangers that impend over the empire. If our lord come to the court to-morrow we must again bitterly remonstrate with him." Having settled their method of procedure they separated for the night, and assembled next day in the hall of audience.

About the middle of the fifth watch his majesty made his appearance, upon which they divided themselves into civil and military classes, and performed their homage. This ceremony over, the Emperor addressed them. "For some days," said he, "I have not been able to attend to the government in consequence of various engagements, but now I am here. What have you to say before me?"

Lew Keen and Seay Ts'een immediately advanced from the ranks, and, holding their insignia of office in their hands, said to him, "We have heard that our lord, in company

with those favourites, Lew Kin and his companions, spends his time within the palace contending with them in the music of Tsin and the songs of Cheaou, laughing and dancing; and, moreover, that birds and beasts are confessedly exhibited before him, darkening and dissipating his sacred mind. These things are the crimes of the eunuchs. We were in hopes that our lord would have had a care of his royal person, and punished them according to the laws, but, on the contrary, he reposes more confidence in them. We earnestly hope our lord will reflect carefully upon the subject."

The emperor blushed on listening to their reproof, and felt ashamed; but the eunuchs being by his side immediately suggested to him that Seay Ts'een and his friends, by blaming their sovereign openly on account of such small matters, did infinite harm to the administration, and showed much unfaithfulness; and the Emperor, assuming an indignant look, moved his sleeves, and broke up the audience.

That day all the officers looked each

other in the face with significant glances. It was plain that their prince was devoted to the slandering eunuchs, and that it was difficult to remonstrate bitterly with him; so with sorrowful hearts they left the court, and retired to their several residences.

> "When princes hear not faithful words,
> Their kingdoms fall by faithless swords."

CHAP. III.

"'Tis not the strength of man that need be dreaded;
The secret spring of danger 's in the heart;
And 'tis the crafty acts, the villain's deeds.
Thus the ambitious eunuch and his friends
Perilled their monarch in Keang Nan fields."

Our story turns now to Lew Kin and his associates, who were exceedingly alarmed by the boldness of the officers in openly reproving their craftiness, and the effect which their words had produced on the Emperor, who was angry and silent. Having attended him back to the palace, they retired together to a secret apartment, the door of which they shut. Lew Kin then observed to them that though his majesty was acting at present in accordance with their schemes, it was to be feared, from the earnest remonstrances of the ministers, that their offices would not last long; and moreover that his majesty had merely conferred on him a temporary appointment, saying, that

when he met with a statesman of ability he would take other measures. "If the royal heart," said he, "once undergo a change, it will be difficult to preserve this office; and I fear also that we shall not escape the injuries of other men. We must devise, therefore, a deep scheme to get some merit, which may afford his majesty a subject with which to repress the language of the officers. This accomplished, we may rest free from the apprehension of danger, and will receive the office for good. If the Emperor repose full confidence in us, we may take advantage of the opportunity to accomplish something more. But if we cannot devise some such scheme, our present merit will prove but as the dew on the grass, which no sooner feels the beams of the sun than it disappears without a trace."

When he had finished, they all held down their heads in thought. Suddenly one of them, Kŭh Tae Yung, exclaimed that he had got a plan, but knew not whether it could be employed or not. They all inquired what it was, when he explained it in the following terms: "If you would carry into

effect the desires of your hearts, you must not shrink from a scheme of murder. To-morrow I will privately leave the palace, and proceed in a haste to some desolate and retired village. There, by the expenditure of some money, I can impose upon a stupid rustic, and engage him to return with me. He shall assume the dress of one of us, and remain concealed in a deep and retired apartment of the palace, where we can treat him exceedingly well. Being a low and ignorant fellow it will be easy to cozen him over, and persuade him to personate an assassin, and grasping a sword rush out to pierce the emperor. We, in the mean while, will advance forward, and, by a stratagem, cut off his head to extinguish all proof against us. Thus we shall acquire the merit of saving his majesty's life, and need not trouble ourselves about not getting this office for good, or not accomplishing other great things."

No sooner had they heard the plan, than one and all clapped their hands, exclaiming, "Wonderful! Nothing could be better! Nothing could be better!" Lew Kin for his

part took out three hundred taels of silver, and gave them to Yung, charging him instantly to set about the affair, and not to delay or doubt, for should it get abroad, it would occasion them trouble. Yung received the money, and the same day left the palace and proceeded directly to the rustic hamlets in the hilly districts.

He inquired about for several days without meeting with a suitable person; but suddenly one day he came to a hill farm, where he saw an old woman weeping bitterly before the door. Having stopped his horse, he advanced forward, and inquired what was the matter. The woman dried her eyes, and looked at him, when, observing his officer's dress, she replied, "My surname is Chang. Last year I was unfortunately deprived, by death, of my husband Ching Yŭh Teen, and left with two children. Ching Ying, the eldest, who is in his twenty-eighth year, is engaged out as a cooly; but his brother Ching Paou, who is only twenty, pays no regard to my advice, but keeps company with a set of wicked and idle young men, who have no proper way

of gaining a livelihood, and abandon themselves to gambling and lewdness. In spite of my repeated admonitions, he has persisted in this course, till, as I was informed, he has been seized this morning by a magistrate's officer. I am not, indeed, foolishly fond of him, but, being now upwards of seventy years, I do not wish to see my son die in the public market-place. This is the cause of my weeping. Seeing that your honour vouchsafes me your compassion, I have truthfully related every particular, and pray that you will exert your kindness to deliver my worthless son. Let me but once see him again, and I could instantly close my eyes in peace."

On hearing this statement, which seemed to afford him the means of accomplishing his object, the eunuch determined to spend some money, and deliver her son to serve his own purpose. Accordingly he said to her, "My good lady, your grief exceedingly moves my compassion. I feel inclined to go to some expense to deliver your son, but do not know your sentiments."

At this she eagerly replied, "Only let your honour do this great act of kindness, and both mother and son shall ever feel bound to do our utmost to express our gratitude." She then suddenly knelt on the earth, but Yung hastily raised her up, saying that such a small matter need not affect her in that way.

He then took his leave of her, and proceeded to the city, where he engaged a friend to purchase the liberation of Ching Paou, and then returned with the young man to his mother. The old woman was very glad, and both she and her son knelt down and knocked their heads on the ground in token of their gratitude. Yung observed to her, "Your son is young and vigorous, just at the time of life when he ought to be employed; why do you not engage him to learn some trade that he may make his way in life, instead of detaining him here, to do such improper things, and keep yourself in continual fear? "Why," replied she, "this is what I most earnestly desire, but as there is no man to put him forward, it is of no use talking about it."

"Seeing," said the eunuch, "that you are so advanced in years, and with only these two sons, and that you do not wish to keep them at home in idleness and dissipation, and moreover that this young man's appearance is not common, I am willing to take him with me, in hopes that hereafter he may have an opportunity to advance himself. But I do not know whether you are willing that he should accompany me or not.

"Let not your honour say so," replied the old woman. "Since my son has been so fortunate as to obtain his deliverance through your kindness, you are as it were a second parent to me and my boy; and as you have this excellent intention of further assisting him, why should I not readily comply? But in my excitement I have forgotten to ask your honour's name and surname, your dwelling place, and your office.

"My surname," returned the eunuch falsely, "is Chaou, and my name Kwân. My family belongs to the capital, and I am an officer in attendance on one of the

princes. Being out on some business, I happened to pass by this way, when seeing you weeping so bitterly, I was impelled to inquire the reason. On hearing your true and particular account, my compassion was moved to rescue your son. And now, when I see his lofty appearance, I feel a desire to take him with me, and put him in the way of making his fortune. As you second my views, I beg to present you with a hundred taels of silver, to provide your daily necessaries. As to clothes, a cap, baggage, and such matters for the young man, all these I will provide without troubling you to concern yourself. Should fortune smile upon him I shall order him to return and bring you word."

With these words he took a hundred taels from his side, and gave them to the old woman; he also gave thirty taels to Ching Paou to enable him to meet any expenses which might occur. Nothing could exceed the joy of the mother and her son at this: they returned the silver, however, saying, that after receiving so much kindness from his honour they could not also

take money. But Yung instantly besought them to accept it, observing that there was nothing in such a small matter to talk about. Thus constrained they received the money with thanks, and entered the house to put it by, at the same time respectfully requesting Yung to enter the hall and take some tea.

Ching Paou, being ordered by his mother to get ready for travelling, went within to make up a bundle of clothes. This done, he came out to the hall, burned incense, and made a report to his ancestors. He then took a respectful leave of his mother, adding, "When my brother comes home you can tell him that he need not inquire after me. As soon as any thing fortunate occurs, I shall send some one with a letter to let you know. I hope, mother, you will spend your days free from trouble and anxiety about me."

All this his mother promised: having got the money she was glad, and put on no sorrowful countenance at parting, but merely gave him some advice to be careful of his person and particular about his con-

duct, in order to comfort her heart. She then accompanied him out of the house, and having again bowed her head to the earth in acknowledgment of Tae Yung's favour, and observed that she hoped Ching Paou's conduct would recompense him, she retraced her steps.

The young man joyfully accompanied Tae Yung directly to the city. They went first to an inn, where Yung purchased clothes and a hat for him, the pattern of those worn by the eunuchs. They then entered together, under cover of the dark, into the palace, where the eunuch deposited Ching Paou in a retired apartment, and went and reported his success to Lew Kin. His leader ordered him to be careful, and promised when he had accomplished his purpose that he would reward him very largely. From this time the eight associates occupied themselves in ascertaining the various places where the young monarch amused himself. One day Lew Kin heard that a foreign kingdom had presented several wonderful animals, which the Emperor had desired to be put

in the imperial garden, intimating his intention to go and see them in the course of a few days. He instantly communicated the intelligence to Yung, and told him to set about his business. The latter accordingly went straight to Ching Paou's apartment, having put on a very pleasant look. Observing this, the young man inquired what made his honoured patron look so joyful. "It must be," said he, "that you have some good intentions towards me."

"Having brought you here," replied the eunuch, "and now for several days not found any way to enable you to show your merit, and make your fortune, I felt a little ashamed. To-day, however, I have thought of a very profitable scheme, but do not know whether you are willing to take the trouble of it for me. I am afraid you may deny my request; and should the matter once get out, the evil consequences will not be small. It was on this account that I laughed gently, keeping my secret, and not venturing to speak out directly." "I am indebted," replied Ching Paou, "to your honour's kindness for my life,

and for many kind offices. I have no pearls to offer you in recompense, but should you issue your order for me to go into boiling water, or to tread upon fire, I should not decline. And how should I dare to make known the business of my noble patron?—if you do not believe me, let me make an oath to heaven."

With these words he descended the steps of the hall, and, pointing to heaven, swore, saying, "I Ching Paou have received the largest favours from Lord Chaou, and have not yet found an opportunity to recompense him: to-day he has some business to communicate to me; should I disclose it, may heaven slay and earth exterminate me, and may I ever dwell in hell! Can you not now trust me?" said he to his patron when he had finished.

"My worthy brother," replied Yung, "you are complete both in righteousness and valour."

He then took him by the hand and went up with him to the hall. Then putting his mouth close to Paou's ear, he said,

"I must acquaint you with some things of which you are ignorant. His majesty having promoted the great Lord Lew to high power has been bitterly remonstrated with by the nobles in a joint representation. Lew is consequently afraid that the emperor's views should be changed, and wishes to secure himself in his office. In order to do this he has contrived a very good plan, but one which requires the assistance of a valiant worthy to carry it into effect. Being anxious that you should display your merit, and establish your fortune, I mentioned your valour to my lord, and introduced you to him. He was much pleased with you, and expressly ordered me to return and request you to dress yourself as an assassin, and conceal a sharp sword about you. This night at the fifth watch he will send me to conduct you to the imperial gardens, where you can lie hid in a thicket of bamboos. To-morrow, when his majesty shall have reached that spot, you must rush forth, and advance as if to stab him. We being in attendance without the company of any officer of ability will seem to run for-

ward and fight with you. You can pretend to be worsted, and run off in the direction of the east. There we shall take care that there is some place where we can call you to hide; and after that we shall go back and report that you have escaped. When the prince has returned to the palace, I shall come and conduct you out. Thus we shall have the merit of saving his majesty's life, and you will obtain great advancement and rewards from my Lord Kin. Is not this a plan to kill two birds with one stone?"

Ching Paou clapped his hands, and cried, laughing, "I was asking a little ago what business it was, and lo! it is only this trifling affair, and, moreover, very advantageous to myself. How could I think of not complying with your request? If my honoured patron will only come to-night at the fifth watch and conduct me to the place, all will be well!" The joy of Tae Yung at this speech was excessive. He instantly took his leave of the young man, and went to acquaint his associates with his success. They also were delighted, and the other went on to detail

to them his plan. "To-morrow," said he, "when Ching Paou pretends to be worsted, and we are pursuing after him, we can take advantage of his being off his guard to cut off his head, and thus prevent his giving future evidence. Let us then take the head and present it to his majesty in token of our merit." They all nodded assent, and separated after remaining a little to settle every thing.

That night at the fifth watch Yung took Ching Paou and dressed him suitably. He also told him to take with him some dried provisions, and a sharp knife, and then conducted him to a thicket of bamboos behind a large stone in the gardens. There he left him and returned himself to the palace, and waited till his majesty had entered his chariot, when he attended him along with the rest.

At this time the Emperor and Ching Paou were like men in a dream—ignorant of the designs of the crafty eunuchs.

Just as they passed, the Emperor gave orders to guard his chariot to the imperial gardens. On reaching them, as they were

within the precincts of the palace, he merely ordered Lew Kin, with his seven associates and a few of the life-guards, to attend him, and proceeded forward. The prospect of the gardens was indeed delightful. The finest flowers every where looking as if they were welcoming the imperial equipage, radiant with smiles; the birds and beasts in the surrounding cages calling to each other as if receiving his majesty; innumerable multitudes of strange rocks and wonderful mounds; an endless prospect of green firs and verdant bamboos; the faithful ducks in pairs, flying and quacking, and clasping each other's necks in the crystal pools; troops of deer running and chasing each other through the park. His majesty looked at the various objects in silence, but with pleasure, and then ordered his attendants to conduct him to the animals which had lately been presented. No sooner had they approached a thicket of bamboos than out rushed a man with a red napkin about his head, a pheasant's feather in his cap, and in his hand a sharp sword. With

hasty steps he advanced with the sword, as if to pierce the Emperor, who was so terrified that his soul fled away beyond the heavens, and his spirit to the nine regions of clouds. Crying with a loud voice to his attendants to save him, he ran hastily back. In the mean time Lew Kin and the others drew their swords, and interposing their persons before the life-guards, pretended to advance and fight with the assassin. After exchanging a few blows with him, Lew Kin, afraid that the life guards would come up and snatch the merit from him, made a sign with his eyes to Ching Paou to run off. The latter accordingly pretended to be worsted, and ran off in the direction of the east, followed by the eunuchs. When he had got to a considerable distance, he turned his head, and seeing none of the soldiers, he stopped till the others came up and inquired where he should hide. Lew Kin, pointing below a gallery, said, "Here, in this old well." Ching Paou, ignorant of his design, held down his head to look in. At this moment the other took advantage

of his position, and suddenly cut off his head.

By this time the life-guards had come up, but Lew took the head, and proceeded with his companions to the imperial carriage. His majesty's joy was extreme. "Yours," said he, "is the merit of saving my life. I will return and promote you: only it is a pity you did not take the villain alive, that we might have inquired about his employers."

"He was so fierce," replied the other, "that I could not take him alive, and to prevent his escaping I cut him down."

The Emperor observing that, as the villain was dead, they need not inquire into the matter any further, ordered them to attend him to the palace, and there reported the occurrence to his mother, who commanded him to be careful for the future, and not to go out without good reason, and never without some great officer in attendance. The young monarch received her orders and left, but she called Lew Kin to her, and presented him with a

quantity of gold and pearls, and other precious things. The eunuch knocked his head on the earth, received them, and departed. Half of the presents he gave to Tae Yung, and the remaining half he divided among the other six.

> "Deep was his plan, and well it met reward,
> The splendid pearls of her majesty."

CHAP. IV.

"As when a sudden change comes o'er the spirit of our dream,
And dark'ning clouds and stormy winds dispel the noon-tide beam,
Or music harsh at midnight hour assails the sleeping ear,
So feel the faithful ministers, and drop the bitter tear.
Their loyal words can't penetrate the palace halls so deep,
Yet bolder there the eunuch dogs their hateful revels keep."

After his return from the imperial gardens the Emperor manifested a still greater love for Lew Kin and his associates, thinking himself indebted to them for his life. Accordingly as soon as he appeared in court next day, he called Lew Kin to his presence, and promoted him to the superintendence of all ceremonies within the palace, the supervision of all memorials from the different parts of the empire, and the command of the imperial guards, and confirmed

him at the same time in the other offices which have been already mentioned. The officers having remonstrated with his majesty on account of his temporary appointment of Lew Kin to those offices, though they had as yet received no reply, were in hopes that he would become conscious of his errors and dismiss the crafty eunuch. When they saw the Emperor, however, this day, as soon as he reached the court, without making a single inquiry into any other business, immediately confirm the appointment, they advanced in great displeasure and addressed him:

"The government of the camps," said they, "and the superintendence of all representations, as well those from foreign kingdoms as from various parts of the empire, involving the promotion and the cashiering of the magistrates, are most important trusts, and demand in him who would discharge them an heroic disposition and consummate talents. But Lew Kin is merely an in-door officer, altogether ignorant of learning. He may be fit indeed to run about the palace waiting on your ma-

jesty, but is quite incompetent for this office. If he fall into blunders, he will make the government ridiculous, not only to your majesty's subjects but also to foreign nations. You yourself even will not escape being charged with employing improper persons. We beseech you to think of the subject wisely and carefully."

The Emperor, entirely devoted to the eunuch, was not in a condition to distinguish the faithful from the crafty. Feeling, too, that the officers took occasion of every appointment which he made to remonstrate bitterly with him, and remembering the insinuation of Lew Kin, that they wished to involve him in trouble, he flew into a rage and reviled them.

"Talentless fools!" said he, "you do nothing but plan your own ease, and seek to involve me in trouble. If, instead of devolving this office on Lew Kin, I had conferred it on you, I should have found a pretty heap of business! To him, moreover, belongs the merit of saving my life. Promotion is fitly conferred on him who is not an inanimate image like you."

The officers dared not reply to his revilings, but hung down their heads and blushed. In the mean time Leang Choo advanced forward. He had come to the audience to request leave of retirement for a time, as he had caught a slight illness. On this account, not finding it convenient to speak, he had not joined the others in their remonstrance; but now, seeing the Emperor's rage and hearing him speak of Lew Kin's merit in saving his life, he could not restrain his misgivings as to the matter, and approaching, with an effort, said to his majesty, that he ought to die a thousand deaths for not being able always to protect his person, but that he was not aware what peril his majesty had been in that afforded Lew Kin an opportunity of saving his life, and begged he would inform him. Upon this the Emperor related to him, one by one, the circumstances which had occurred in the imperial gardens. The minister having heard that the assassin was killed by Lew Kin could not believe it, but cast the subject over in his mind. An assassin, thought he, has always an employer, and

the imperial gardens are within the precincts of the palace. How could such a person get there, if he were not assisted by some one within? Assassins, too, were always chose on account of their valour, which would lead them to execute every commission; how was it possible that such a cowardly slave as the eunuch should be able to slay one of them? Reflecting on these things he came to the conclusion that there was some deception in the affair. Not being provided with proofs, however, it was difficult to carry on a quarrel with the eunuch; and his majesty being entirely devoted to him, it was vain to think of succeeding by remonstrance. He resolved, therefore, to remain patient for a time, and keep a watch upon their movements. He accordingly simply reported his sickness, and requested that he might be permitted to leave his duties till he should be better; whereupon the Emperor granted him a month's leisure, on the expiry of which he was to return to the court.

When Leang Choo had finished returning thanks, the Emperor again gave Lew

Kin and his associates a large sum of money, and many precious articles, after which he moved his sleeves in dissolution of the court, and retired hand in hand with them into the palace.

All the officers left the court in wrath. Among others four of the principal of them, Yang Ting Ho, Le Tung Yang, Lew Kèèn, and Se'ay Ts'een, reflecting on the prince's blindness in favouring the eunuchs, and refusing to listen to reproof, saw that ere long the troubles of the nation would multiply, and presented petitions requesting to be allowed to resign their offices, and retire to their villages. Lew Kin took the opportunity to make some slanderous remarks about them, so that the young monarch was foolishly persuaded to issue a manifest, accepting the resignations of them all but Le Tung Yang, and ordering them to leave the court without delay, lest their presence should occasion trouble.

Gentle reader, what think you was the reason of the exception? You will find it in the character of Le Tung Yang. He was from Tung Woo hèèn of E Chang foo, in

Woo Nam province, and had entered into office from the rank of Han Lin. He was of an humble, respectful, silent and patient disposition, on which account Lew Kin and his crafty associates were pleased with him, as it prevented him from taking any active steps in opposition to them. They were afraid too that people would talk about their grasping after the sole authority, if they dismissed all the loyal officers at once, and consequently requested the Emperor in private to confer large employments on Le Tung Yang.

There was nothing in which the young monarch did not follow their plans. He accordingly appointed him president of the board of civil office, and high chancellor of Hwa Kae hall; and, contrary to his inclinations, the minister was constrained to repair to the court, and express his thanks.

The others, immediately on receiving the imperial will, prepared their baggage to return to their villages, and were accompanied to the long portico by their brother officers, who there spread for them a parting feast.

Le Tung Yang was among the number; while sitting at the feast he suddenly looked up to heaven, and sighed, saying,

> "Would that I might accompany my friends!
> No wish of dwelling here I cherish."

The others, on hearing his words, observed that he ought not to give way to such a feeling of sorrow, for that it had ever been the practice of heroes, either to maintain their purity by retiring from the scene of confusion, or to sacrifice their lives for the benefit of their times, according to the circumstances in which they were placed, without being restricted to one line of acting; and that they hoped that after their departure he would exert his talents to assist the Emperor, and avert the calamities of the people. This, they assured him, would occasion them the liveliest joy. Soon after they took leave of one another with a bow, and departed.

After they were gone, the Emperor seeing that the court was empty, and hearing that Leang Choo had recovered from his illness, appointed him president of the six boards,

and a member of the inner council. It was during the month of absence granted to him that the other officers asked leave to retire; and it was entirely owing to this circumstance, that he had not been dismissed with them, for he would certainly have presented a similar request. But here the hand of heaven was evident, in retaining this faithful minister, to support the fortunes of the Choo family. Lew Kin on his part took the opportunity to increase the offices of his partisans, and strengthen daily his military authority, so that the officers both within and without the court stood in dread of him. The only check upon his violent designs arose from the fear which he still entertained of the upright loyalty of Leang Choo and Le Tung Yang. He was restrained by this from giving full developement to his intentions, and occupied himself chiefly with flattering and pleasing his majesty, and slandering the various officers, so as to give them enough to do in securing themselves, without having leisure to remonstrate with the Emperor about him.

The left Censor, Séen Yen Hway, however, was so displeased with the retirement of the officers, and Lew Kin's grasping at the sole authority, that he induced the whole board of censors to join with him in a request that the eunuchs might be punished, and the rectitude of the laws displayed. Wang Show Jin, also, superintendent of the board of war, united with them, and, moreover, earnestly besought his majesty to recall the officers, and restore them to their situations, that the path of remonstrance might be cleared; and not only this, but he requested him to abandon his feasting and jollity, to attend to the government, and cut off the crafty villains which were about him, to secure the repose of the nation. All these steps, they assured him, would be a source of joy to them; but if their lord would not listen to their advice they were afraid that for the future, whatever might occur to shake the stability of the throne, and whatever insurrections might disturb the condition of the country, no minister would venture to render his counsel, and he would thus be kept in ignorance.

There was surely enough in this consideration to make him coolly reflect. When the Emperor had received the paper, while he had it in his hand, he asked Lew Kin what errors he had committed that the officers kept in this way presenting representations against him. There must surely be some enmity between them that they had adopted such a procedure.

At these words the eunuch knelt before his majesty in great consternation, and replied with tears: "There is no enmity between your slave and the officers. But if one have not plenty of mutton and wine at his disposal, it is a hard thing to temper the mouths of men. Look at the autumn moon, which casts its shadow over the dusty world. While fair ladies rejoice in its brightness, thieves hate its light. Or look at the spring rains, the harbingers of plenty. While the husbandman rejoices in their fatness, travellers repine at the dirty roads. And if these heavenly influences cannot imbue the minds of men with a feeling of contentment, how should your slave expect to do it? In such an age as the present, indeed, it would be

difficult for the holiness of Chow King to escape baseless comments, and the loyalty of Hŏ Wang would be assailed by calumnious insinuations; and can such a person as your slave expect to be free from these charges? But your majesty affords me the most apt example. You are the honourable sovereign of this empire, and were merely enjoying what amusement could be afforded by a few hawks and hounds, without disturbing any spring of government, or injuring any business of the nation, and yet all these officers have resigned their employments and retired. They are actuated solely by a desire to spend their own days pleasantly; but, as if your majesty are in fault, they have again and again joined in bitter remonstrances. Your slaves are ignorant and valueless individuals, whose death need not occasion any lamentation; but I fear that you will one day be compelled to regulate your every movement according to the wishes of these officers, and Emperor though you are, will not be able on your own motion to remove a single crafty and wicked magistrate."

The Emperor's heart was pierced by the sword of the eunuch's tongue and the spear of his lips. No sooner had Lew Kin ceased than he struck the table, and exclaimed in indignation, "Do you officers presume to form a party, and trust in your numbers to overrule me?" With this he issued an order that Seen Yen Fei and the others should each receive thirty strokes of the great bamboo, be deprived of their offices, reduced to the ranks of the common people, and be ever after incapable of employment. The order was no sooner issued than it was carried into effect; and a mournful sight it was to see some of the aged ministers expire under the infliction of the punishment. A further disgrace was in reserve for Wang Show Jin, for he was appointed postmaster of Lung Ch'eng in Kwei Chow.

No sooner did the news of this transaction reach Leang Choo and Le Tung Yang than they hastened to the court to interfere and remonstrate; but before they arrived the order had been carried into effect, and all the officers had been driven out. His majesty, too, had retired into the palace, so

that finding themselves too late for their object they could only privately consult together. On the one hand, when they considered the youth of the king, and how he was deluded by the crafty eunuchs, they felt bound by the dying charges of his father not only to use all their energies, but even to venture their lives in laying their remonstrances before him. But on the other hand the monarch was so abandoned to the eunuchs that their death would be of no avail. And as the court was now empty of faithful officers, and every place was filled by the crafty miscreants, if they too should retire there would be no one to assist his majesty in the changes that might be expected, and they would prove false to the charge of the former emperor. On the whole, therefore, they thought it best to reserve their fading lives and watch the movements of the party. And having resolved to consult again when any dangerous circumstances appeared, they separated and returned from the court.

We must in the mean time turn our atten-

tion to Wang Show Jin. He was from Shih Ping heen of Lin Gan foo in Yun Nan province, and had entered into office after attaining the second literary degree. His disposition was upright, loyal, and independent. In military subjects he possessed the abilities of Lun and Woo, and in civil matters the wisdom of Choo Kŏ. He was enraged at the failure of his representation, and at being degraded to the postmastership of Lung Ch'eng, but had no resource. The same day he prepared his family, and commenced his journey to Kwei Chow.

Lew Kin, however, well knowing his valour and wisdom as well as his loyal and upright nature, and afraid that he would cherish his hatred, though at a distance from the court, and be the occasion of trouble and danger to himself, formed a plan to assassinate him. He accordingly ordered four ruffians in his confidence to go before the minister to a secret and dangerous pass about the middle of the way, and there kill him and all his family. This he conceived to be an excellent plan to pluck up the roots while the grass was cut

down. But the scheme was frustrated, for when Wang Show Jin had got as far as the mouth of the river in Tsëen Thang, observing that the traces of inhabitants were few, that on both sides were steep and dangerous hills, and that it was not possible for more than one boat to pass through at a time, he became immediately suspicious, and the truth flashed upon him. "How is it," thought he, "that this pass is so dangerous? It must be that the crafty villains purposely sent me hither, that they might have an opportunity to assassinate me." On this he stopped the boatmen, and retired about a bowshot, saying they would proceed to-morrow. That night he tossed about on his bed, unable to sleep; reflecting on the conduct of Lew Kin, who had often sent individuals to induce him to make his submission to him, he could not doubt but that the villain had been incensed at his rejecting such advances, and therefore brought on him the present calamity. On no other principle could he explain how it was that while he and the whole

board of censors had presented a common remonstrance, his majesty in his rage had ordered the others to be punished with the bamboo, and reduced them to the ranks of the people, and degraded him alone to be the postmaster of Lung Ch'eng. A postmaster was a contemptible officer, and besides, there was an individual in present occupancy. It was plain that the eunuch and his villainous associates, aware of the opportunities which the difficulties of this pass afforded to assassins to lie concealed, had sent him there for the express purpose of assassinating him to secure themselves against future dangers. But such a deceitful design could not escape his penetration, and he would produce a plan by which he might at once escape the infamy of such a mean office, and preserve his family. Taking advantage of the darkness of the night, he would feign madness, make his way to the shore, and, pretending to throw himself into the river, thus escape the inquiries of the villains.

Having determined on this plan, without

saying any thing about it to his family, he wrote a letter which he deposited in his sleeve. He then feigned madness, speaking nonsense, laughing and weeping alternately, and abusing every one whom he met. His family, being ignorant of his plan, believed, as well as the attendants, that his sickness was real. Owing to the suddenness of his seizure they could adopt no measures to secure him; taking advantage of which and the darkness of the night he dashed from them to the shore, and ran to some distance along the bank. There he took off his hat and shoes upon the way, and threw a large stone into the water. He then left a stanza with the letter which he had written, and retired into the Woo E hills under a different name and surname. Some members of the family left the ship to look for him, but when they met with these traces of him, they immediately said that he had thrown himself into the river. The rest came in consternation to the place, and all believed he was really dead. In a short time the justice of Cheě Kang, and

Yang Wan Ying, the local magistrate, heard of the transaction, and came to appoint a sacrifice for him, while all the members of his family put on mourning robes to lead his soul home, and bewailed him till the voice of their weeping was heard for several le.

The following are the verses which he left: —

> "When once a man forsakes this scene,
> And leaps into the deep,
> 'Tis vain to try to follow him
> Except in dreaming sleep.
> Yet the true statesman's dismal grief
> A hundred years can't bound;
> Night after night with Tsz'she's cries
> The waters still resound."

On referring to the letter they found that it contained a request to the local magistrate to send a ship of war to conduct his family home, with which Yang Wan Ying instantly complied, and conveyed them in safety to Yun Nan.

The care of Show Jin for his family was here conspicuous, for when he had effected

his own escape he was still anxious to secure them from the injuries of the crafty eunuchs. A stanza has been handed down in his praise: —

"Had not Show Jin with skill profound been fraught,
Him in their toils the poisonous dogs had caught."

CHAP. V.

"'Twere well did thoughtless man recall to mind
The changes of this weary mortal state.
The crafty villain then perchance might find,
What death does in the future him await,
Reading in history's page the villain's fate.
Dainties indulged bring sickness in their train,
And pleasures oft prove fleeting as the wind.
The soul unsatisfied proclaims them vain,
And heaven in wrath sends down its dread avenging pain."

AFTER the departure of Yen Fei and Show Jin with the other officers, Lew Kin succeeded in filling the court for the most part with his own creatures. When word moreover was brought him by the assassins that Show Jin had drowned himself, he felt no longer restrained by the same considerations of prudence, and proceeded accordingly to recommend Tseaou Fang to be president of the board of civil office,

high chancellor of Kin Shin Hall, and a member of the inner council.

This individual was from Kin Shan hèèn, of Ean Lŏ foo, in Woo Pĭh province, and had entered upon office from the second military degree. His disposition was covetous and insolent, devoid of benevolence, and cringing towards people of authority and rank. He was on very friendly terms with the Eunuch, and from the time he obtained the above promotion, searched out and purchased for him beautiful and curious articles of amusement to exhibit before the Emperor.

One day Lew Kin, observing his majesty absorbed in fun and feasting, took the opportunity to select several very difficult memorials, and present them for his decision. The young monarch, as he expected, was displeased, and observed that he had conferred that office on his favourite, that he might secure his own repose, but that if he was not able for the employment, but must give him the trouble of deciding the representations, there was no reason why he should fill the office. The Eunuch and

his creatures were delighted to hear these observations; from that time they managed the important affairs of the army and the kingdom just as they wished, without ever referring to the imperial will. Nor did a single officer, whether civil or military, great or small, offer them the slightest resistance, but on the contrary, all regarded them with dread.

This state of affairs, however, lay heavily on the minds of Leang Choo and Le Tung Yang. Sleeping or waking, these two statesmen had no rest, but were ever on the watch to guard against emergencies. Several times they wished to enter the palace and represent the state of affairs to the Queen dowager; but as the Emperor was ever feasting in the court with his creatures, they did not find an opportunity, and could only brood in sorrow over the condition of the sovereign.

About this time too the Eunuch built a mansion for himself in the highest style of architecture, at some distance from the royal palace. Thither he retired and plunged into every sort of luxury and

disgraceful habit. It could not be expected that the empire should continue in the enjoyment of repose; and we turn now to contemplate the miserable condition into which it had fallen.

In the seventh year of the cycle, and the sixth year of Ching Tĭh, one Wang Che Fan, of the village Pĭh Hwa, belonging to Shĭh Tseuen hèèn of Yèèn Gan foo in Shen Se province, raised a rebellion. That year rice became exceedingly dear in the three districts of Shĭh Tseuen, Tsze Yang, and Pĭh Ho. To such extremities were the people reduced that a single grain was valued as a pearl. The minds of the multitude were brooding about insurrection when this Wong Che Fan appeared. He had gained the lowest military degree in the time of Hung Che; but not succeeding farther at several competitions, he lost heart, and remained at home in his village, forming a connection with all the idle fellows about, and then, in dependence on their strength, oppressing the weak. The famishing people flocked to him in numbers, and his power and reputation gradually ex-

tended, till he was able every dark night to proceed to the plunder of the farms and hamlets of other districts. His brother, Wong Kwan, was well skilled in military affairs, and had contracted a friendship with one Chŭh Ying Peaou, a strong and skilful soldier, who took to himself the title of king of the little barbarians, and formed a band which did not shrink from great and open violence. The villagers in the neighbourhood dared not excite their anger, but called them the Golden Bees' Association. Their lurking-place was between two hills, in a valley of several le in length, and accessible only by a single path. Here on the heights Che Fan erected forts facing the four quarters, and dug at the entrance of the path a moat, over which he threw a floating bridge. In this retreat they amassed a large quantity of powder, arrows, and stones. At the back of it the hills were very numerous, and the road branched off in several directions, so that a person might enter, but not be able to find his way out again. Owing to these circumstances the royal troops could not destroy them, and

they continued to increase till their number amounted to several thousands. On this their leader divided them into bands, and quartered them in private camps in secret places among the neighbouring villages, that they might serve him as a sort of wings. Whenever their provisions failed, out they sallied on plundering excursions, so that merchants could no longer carry on their commerce.

The magistrate of Shĭh Tseuen district, Chang Këŏ, Woo Ming Kèèn, the captain, and Fan Sz' Kwei, the lieutenant-colonel, having got news of the rebel, proceeded with five hundred soldiers to take him in the dark. When they reached Pĭh Hwa village, they came unexpectedly upon Che Fan, who was returning from a plundering expedition with more than two hundred men. Having immediately recognised the royal troops, and knowing their intention must be to take himself, he fired a signal gun into the air. His partisans thronged at the sound from all quarters, and surrounded the Shĭh Ch'uen troops. The discharge of fire illuminated the heavens, and

a desperate fight took place. The thieves seemed to increase the faster, the greater slaughter was made among them, while there was no aid or rescue for the soldiers. The villagers all shut their doors, and kept inside, not daring to come out and excite the rage of Che Fan. The contest was, notwithstanding, maintained till day-break, when the field presented a pitiable spectacle, Chang Këŏ, Woo Ming Kèèn, and five hundred soldiers all slain by the thieves. The only person who escaped was the lieutenant-colonel, Fan Sz' Kwei, and he was severely wounded. He immediately repaired to the sub-magistrate, Leang Joo Keun, who wrote letters announcing their distress to every magistrate. Throughout the whole city the inhabitants were thrown into consternation by the news. Sitting or sleeping they could find no rest, but, fearing the thieves would come to the city, dispersed in every direction, seeking hiding places.

> "Evils come not alone. The broken roof
> Nightly admits the rain; rebellion fierce
> Treads close upon the heels of grisly famine."

CHAP. VI.

"Loud blow the piercing winds; yet louder far
Is heard the trumpet's summons to the war:
In desperate fight the polish'd weapons gleam;
Soon o'er the river floats the bloody steam;
Withers the red, the verdant trees are torn,
And of their pride the flowery fields are shorn.
Yet the broad river flows in silence on,
Nor heeds the tumult and the dying groan."

CHE FAN, seeing that he had slain the officers of the hèèn, and that the matter was become as great as the heavens, felt that he had now no resource but to prosecute his rebellion. Following up his victory, therefore, he seized on all the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages. Those who were willing to follow him he received; those that would not he slew. Such was the state of things that the greater part of them purchased their lives by their submission; but some who were of a determined and upright character, railed at the

thieves for a while, and then readily cut their own throats, in order to leave a fragrant name to posterity. The number who submitted to him that day amounted to several thousands, whom he received one by one, entering their names and surnames in a book, that he might conveniently keep an eye upon them.

This done, he dispatched some individuals to the city to watch for news, and others with signal-guns to keep guard at the entrances of the several villages which had submitted. Their orders were to discharge one of the guns if any royal troops should come upon them; and upon the report he himself would march to their support. Some of the new levy were then ordered to throw the bodies of the slain into pits among the hills; after which he returned to his retreat and reviewed his companions. Eight were found to be killed, and several tens wounded, either by blows or arrows. He commanded immediately that a list of merit should be made out, to guide him in the bestowal of rewards, when his enterprise should be completed, and that at the same

time a feast should be prepared to solace his brethren for their toils. In a very short space all was ready, when they took their places and laid siege to the bottles.

When the wine had gone round several times, Che Fan arose, and bowing to the assembly thus addressed them: "Brethren, let me beseech your audience. You are aware that at first we had no intention of attempting any thing great. Our desires extended no farther than to maintain possession of a single district, to prevent our being scattered through the empire, and where we might be able, morning and evening, to meet each other. These dogs of magistrates, however, without reflecting on consequences, have come and attacked us; and now this day's exploit leaves us no alternative but to follow up our success. And it is plain that Heaven wills us so to do, else how should we have been able, while unprepared both in our armour and in our minds, to carry off the victory in an instant?

"I have heard moreover that the young Emperor is unprincipled in his proceedings,

reposing his confidence in some slandering eunuchs, and degrading and banishing his loyal ministers; we have only to lead our troops to the capital, sweep away all opposition, and take possession of the empire as easily as one can turn his hand. But, as I said, this day's exploit leaves us no option: if we would stop in our career we cannot. Consider, also, that Yang Yĭh Ts'ing, the Protector-general, as soon as he hears of the late proceedings, will come with an army to destroy our retreat. The place is confined and narrow, and our stock of provisions is not large; and he is at home alike in the council and the field. If he come suddenly upon us, while we are not prepared to meet him, I fear his arrival will be as a clap of thunder, against which one cannot shut his ears. In my humble opinion our best plan is to be beforehand with him. Our number, augmented by the new levies, amounts to more than ten thousand — sufficient to constitute an army with which we may march through the empire, and sweep before us all obstacles. The only difficulty is, that if we

commence our measures without any pretence, the minds of the people will not submit to us, and I wish therefore to raise a flag round which soldiers will gather. This may be effected, by writing on it that Lew Kin is grasping at the sole authority, deceiving the monarch and injuring the faithful ministers, so as to excite the indignation of gods and men, and unsettle the minds of the common people; and that, therefore, this righteous army is raised to slay the crafty villain and extinguish his party. We can intimate in every district through which we pass that neither soldiers nor people need be afraid, nor the officers, whether civil or military; but that, if they oppose us, we shall view them as belonging to the villanous party, take their city, and not leave a single individual alive. If the heroic spirits of the empire favour our object, let them once come to our army and we will receive them, without asking whether they be orthodox, vagabonds, or criminals. As to provisions, we can in the first place lay a tax upon the rich proprietors in the newly

subjected districts, according to their possessions; and having equipped ourselves properly with armour, we can choose a fortunate day and commence our march. We shall first take the two hèèn, Tsze Yang and Pĭh Ho, and after that Yèèn Gan foo. From the latter place we shall advance directly to the capital, which lies only two thousand two hundred le distant, sweep clear and settle the rivers and mountains, and take possession of the kingdom. Such is my plan: what do my brethren think of it?"

The whole assembly was delighted with the speech, and cried out: "The words of our honourable brother show a divine skill and inventiveness, which are far above our reach. But at present the neighbouring districts are oppressed with famine; if we summon soldiers to our standard it is to be feared that the old and the famished will answer to our call. If we do not receive them, we shall fail to secure the confidence of the empire, and if we do receive them we shall weaken the majesty of our army, and at the

same time waste our provisions. This subject you must carefully ponder over."

Fan replied, that their observations were just, and that he would settle the matter in his mind. "But," said he, "it is no child's play to command an army. The first essential is troops, and the next a leader; for it is a military axiom, without a chief an army cannot proceed; without a commander arrangements cannot be effected. We have determined on our object, which cannot be changed; you must now elect a leader who will speedily issue his orders and arrange the regulations of the army."

At these words they all arose and cried out, with a loud voice, "Who but our brother, so complete in knowledge, so fertile in schemes, dare enter upon this office?" Fan, however, declined the appointment, protesting that in reality he had not a tittle of ability, and only a slight acquaintance with the military art. It was not for an ignorant and stupid individual like him to undertake so important an office, and he begged his worthy brethren to appoint some other person of the requisite ability.

They replied that they were determined, and that he must not refuse, upon which they advanced, placed him on a lofty seat, and offered him their homage.

Che Fan could do nothing but return their salutations, and accept the seat. He then said to them that while he was thankful for their overlooking his ignorance, and raising him to the command, he could not but feel ashamed at his own unfitness. As it was, they must understand that the commander of an army could indulge no private feelings. Every one must pay a reverential obedience to his orders, and all contumacy would be visited with punishment, even in the person of his nearest relatives. "Let none," said he, "repine at or resent my words." The multitude, with one voice, cried, that if any one of them disobeyed his orders he would voluntarily submit to the punishment. The general was delighted, and ordered them to return to the feast, when after enjoying themselves pleasantly for a time, they separated.

Next day Fan having erected a tent, and established the camp, assumed the title of

commander-in-chief of the thieves-exterminating troops, and raised a flag behind his tent, with the words "Commander of the armies" written upon it. Having taken his seat in the tent he ordered his attendants to summon the heroes to his presence. These speedily repaired to the place and, after paying their salutations, inquired on what business they had been called. "Our troops," replied the general, "have just been raised: every one should be valiant and active. Let my orders be respected and none of them disobeyed. Be reverent and careful. I now present you with the rules which I have drawn out for the army."

These rules were as follows:

"I. In an engagement the troops are to advance at the sound of the drum, and retire at that of the gong. Every soldier must keep his rank. He who disobeys shall be beheaded.

"II. On the march, to whatever district the troops come, if orders have been issued, they must act according to them; if no orders have been given, they must not

injure the inhabitants. He who disobeys shall be beheaded.

"III. All weapons must be kept bright. On hearing the signal gun the troops must advance quickly. He whose heart fails him on the approach of battle, and will not meet the enemy, shall be beheaded.

"IV. After orders have been issued, the soldiers are not to collect in companies of three or five, and whisper together. When the enemy come to close quarters, the soldiers are not to make a noise. He who disobeys shall receive forty blows.

"V. No person who has taken any soldiers or people at any village on the march can let them go on his own account, but must request an order for his guidance. He who disobeys this shall receive eighty blows.

"VI. No soldier or officer is allowed, when he may find it convenient, to visit his relations, or lodge in people's houses. Neither is any one allowed to get drunk or commit lewdness. Whosoever disobeys shall instantly be beheaded without mercy.

"Military laws are like thunder. Every

one must reverently obey them, in order to escape future repentance. Given in the sixth year of Ching Tĭh, on the fourteenth day of the fourth month."

The same day Che Fan raised his flag around which soldiers might gather, and placed before his tent a stone lion, weighing about a hundred catties. All the people who came to enter the ranks were first tested by this stone. If they could lift it they were admitted to an interview with the general. Ere long idle fellows from every quarter, far and near, and all the convicts from the cities came and joined his troops.

On this very day, a strong man twelve cubits in height and eight in circumference arrived. His carriage was very manly, and he led with him more than a hundred valiant soldiers. Coming to the front of the army he said with a loud voice, "I am Ma Wăn Ching, from E Chuen hèèn of Yen Gan foo, and wish to see the commander in chief; I will trouble you who are in waiting on him to inform him of my request."

The soldiers immediately entered and told the Fan that a majestic looking gentleman calling himself Ma Wăn Ching, from E Chuen hèèn of E Gan foo, in the same province, and who was followed by more than a hundred soldiers like leopards or tigers, had requested them to inform him of his presence, and that they were waiting his decision. Wang Keuen, who was by his brother's side, observed that they had no knowledge of those people from a distance, who might come with some insidious purpose, and were not to be rashly admitted. He hoped the general would think of it.

Che Fan, however, observed to all the officers who were present, "Now is the time to employ men, and we have been inviting worthy soldiers to our party. It will not do to despise and reject these men, for thus we shall prevent all confluence to us from a distance. Besides as they wish to join us, they will probably be found an assistance, but though they should have some insidious purpose, as they do not amount to more than an hundred men, they

cannot do us much harm. Though they were an hundred tigers, we need not fear them. Let us receive them respectfully at present, and watch their movements. By these we can direct our future measures." With these remarks he ordered the door to be thrown wide open, and went forth to meet them. "Pardon me," said he, "for not meeting you at a distance; but I was not aware of the approach of your heroic presence."

Ma Wăn Ching bowed low and replied, "My employment has been to teach disciples in your flourishing foo; but my sister's husband, Wang Show Jin, having been injured by the crafty villains about the court, I have long been anxious to avenge him of his enemies. With my single strength, however, I could do nothing; but, hearing that you were raising a righteous army to destroy the thieves for the good of the kingdom, I felt indignant that I could not fly at once to the capital, extirpate the villanous party, and become a pillar of the empire. With these views I have made nothing of a thousand le, but have come with my dis-

ciples to exert our strength, and advance forward with you. But I do not know whether you will receive us or not." "I am simple," observed Fan, "and without talents, and my knowledge is no larger than a man's who looks at the heavens from a well. I was anxious to call around me heroic spirits, and to form a body of worthy soldiers to exhibit the majesty of our army, and now I am so fortunate as to obtain your instructions and assistance. It is plain that heaven and men are alike favourable to our object: we need not fear that the thieves will not be exterminated. I now appoint you to lead our van. To-day you can sacrifice to your flag, and then with your own disciples, and three thousand soldiers, advance to take possession of the three towns of Shĭh Tseuen, Tsze Yang, and Pĭh Ho. I will lead on the main body behind to your assistance."

Having so said, he delivered an attested seal, flag, and arrows to Ma Wăn Ching, and issued orders in accordance with the above arrangements. The latter received the seal, and sacrificed to the flag. He

then marshalled his soldiers, declaring that his object was to avenge Wang Show Jin; and having warned and addressed his troops, he led them forward to Shĭh Tseuen hèèn. The commander-in-chief being afraid he might show some change of purpose, ordered his brother Wang Keuen to take the command of the next detachment, and to lead after him three thousand men to cooperate with and assist him. He was to keep a watchful eye on Wăn Ching's movements, and if any thing suspicious occurred to unite with Chŭh Yung Paou, and fall upon him with both their forces. Chŭh Yung Paou was appointed to be adjutant-general, and to guard the provisions with four thousand heavy armed troops, and lend his assistance on the march as might be required. When he was gone, Che Fan chose from among his companions all the men of ability and talents. Chang Show Ping was appointed grand-councillor, and the rest obtained the several commands in the left and right wings. They had each five hundred soldiers under them, and were to support

one another. Having made these appointments, he numbered the army by the help of the councillor. There were in all forty-eight officers and thirty-six thousand six hundred and seventy troops. His next step was to break up his camp, and march forward. With his outspread power, flags covering the skies, and drums all beating, he directed his advance to Shĭh Tseuen.

> "Fate's high decree had thousands now inspired,
> And Providence stirr'd up those martial deeds."

CHAP. VII.

" Inscrutable the ways of Providence!
Fell war has now unlimited control,
And gory slaughter stains the dusty earth.
When shall the weapons find their sheaths again,
And peace smile on the teeming myriads?"

THE prefect of Yèèn Gan foo, on receiving the letter of the sub-magistrate of Shĭh Tseuen announcing their distress, and learning that Wang Che Fan was in rebellion, and had slain the magistrate and the captain, and was so desperate as to pay no regard to the laws, instantly wrote an answer, ordering the sub-magistrate to supply for a time the place of his superior, and to manage the business of the revenue, the army, and the people, until he himself could meet all the officers, and devise some plan to send troops to exterminate the thieves, deliver the people, and settle the district. He commanded him

also to set immediately to work on receiving the order, and not to delay in expectation of other help.

After he had sent off this communication he had no rest either to sleep or eat; for reflecting on the fierceness, strength, and number of the thieves, he was afraid that should Shĭh Tseuen hèèn be lost the minds of the people would waver in their allegiance. He summoned therefore all the officers, both civil and military, to meet him at his residence, for the purpose of consulting how they might despatch troops to save the city and preserve the people. These speedily assembled, and after their deliberations were ended and their plans fixed, Kwŏ Ching ordered the Yèèn Gan foo, major-general of the Protectorate of Shen Se, Chaou Ting Heaou, along with Colonel Lew King, to lead eight thousand troops, consisting both of infantry and cavalry, to save Shĭh Tseuen. He also sent letters to the two hèèn, Tsze Yang and Pĭh Ho, commanding troops to be sent to the neighbourhood of Shĭh Tseuen, and to wait there in order to

assist the others. At the same time he wrote to the Protector-general Yang Yih Ts'ing requesting that soldiers might be sent to their assistance. After these points had all been settled, the officers separated, and retired to their several residences.

The troops were immediately got ready, and Chaou Ting Heaou ordered Lew King to advance before him with a corps of three thousand, and engage the enemy. At the same time he ordered Lieutenant Yaou Yŭh Ts'ing to proceed with fifteen hundred men, and lie in wait behind Shĭh Tseuen hèèn till the troops from Tsze Yang and Pĭh Ho came up, and then dash forward and attack the enemy on all sides. "You are thus," said he, "sure of victory, and my soldiers will quickly follow after, and come up with you: only you must act with care."

The colonel commenced his march the same day. All along the way he met the inhabitants leading their children, and running about in distraction. Their bitter cries reached the heavens. "The

thieves," said they, "amounting to one hundred thousand, come on as thick as bees, and have nearly reached the city." On hearing this, Lew King ordered them to make the best of their way to Yèèn Gan foo, and remain secure within the city. He also encouraged them by adding that the royal troops were advancing, so that they need not be afraid. On this the people thanked him, and did according to his order.

The troops had not marched far, when his outriders brought him word that all about the hill in front there was a cloud of dust, as if the rebels were approaching. Having despatched them again to see whether it was so or not, he in the mean while commanded the soldiers to advance speedily to the city, where they were to encamp. On reaching the gate, however, they found it firmly shut; but it was speedily opened on several soldiers knocking at it by the colonel's order. The fact was that the troops and the inhabitants were in great distress from their provisions

being exhausted, and hearing a noise of men and horses outside the gate they concluded that the thieves were attacking the city, and were thrown into great consternation. Having quickly ascended the city tower, however, and recognising the Protector's troops, they hailed them as though they had come down from heaven, and threw the gates wide open to receive them. Lew King made inquiries about the rebels, which were particularly answered by the lieutenant-colonel, and while they were yet speaking, they were assailed by a loud discharge of fire-arms without the city. Having ascended the watch-tower, they beheld a large body of the thieves coming boldly on. At their head appeared a general equipped with a helmet and armour all of silver, and grasping in his hand a silver spear, of a martial appearance, fiercely advancing. The colonel thought within himself, "This man does not look like a partisan of thieves. I suspect he has been deluded into an alliance with them. Our best plan is to take advantage of the present time, while his ranks are unformed, to

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bring him to an engagement. The result will show us what he is."

He then sent Yaou Yŭh Ts'ing with a thousand men to lie in wait behind the city, and at a certain time to discharge a signal gun, and rush forward to the fight. He himself descended from the tower, and having collected the troops into a body led them forth. Ma Wăn Ching, seeing the royal troops sallying from the city, instantly waved his silver spear, on which the rebels formed behind him in a line, and then he himself moved with his horse beneath the flag in the centre, and cried out, "Who comes? Declare your name and surname, and receive death." The colonel at this drew his sword, gallopped forward, and pointing to the other retorted, "Can you open your dog's eyes, and not recognise Colonel Lew King, of the staff of the middle army of the land service of Yèèn Gan foo, of Shen Se? and who are you? Quickly present to me your dog's name."

"I," replied the other with a laugh, "am leader of the vanguard of the Thief-exterminating General—Ma Wăn Ching, here

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at your service." With these words he raised his silver spear, and made a thrust right at Lew King's heart; but the latter warded it off with his sword.

By this time the drums and trumpets of both parties were loudly sounding, and a hard contest was maintained for some time without advantage on either side. But Wang Keuen coming up to the assistance of the rebels, Lew King was afraid, as the enemy's strength was so much increased, that he would be defeated, and waved his sword behind him for a signal to his soldiers to draw off. They retreated fighting, eagerly pursued by the rebels, when suddenly on one side from behind the city were heard three discharges of a signal gun, and a troop of men and horses rushed to the field. At their head appeared a general, who fiercely and with a loud voice cried out, "Rebels! spare your briskness, here am I!" and instantly advanced to stop the pursuit, and engage Wang Keuen.

Lew King reined in his horse, and seeing that it was Lieutenant Yaou YŭhTs'ing

come to his assistance, he turned, formed a junction with his troops, and recommenced the combat. The day, however, was now closing, and in a little the gongs were sounded on both sides, and the contending parties drew off to their respective camps.

That evening the colonel observed to Yaou Yŭh Ts'ing, while they were in the tent together, that during the engagement of the preceding day the enemy's ranks had not appeared in very good order, and that he supposed they would not be able to arrange them, owing to their being engaged in pitching their camp. It would be the best plan, therefore, for the lieutenant, at the third watch, to make an attack upon their camp with two thousand men. As most probably they would be unprepared to receive them, each soldier should carry with him a quantity of gunpowder and straw, to set their intrenchments on fire. The enemy would be sure to flee, and then he himself would attack them on the right and left, and thus gain a complete victory. The lieutenant replied that he thought the

plan a very good one, and orders were given to the troops to take a good fighting meal, and to be prepared by the second watch with their accoutrements, for at the third beat of the drum they should march to attack the enemy's camp. They were also told to take plenty of powder and straw with them, which they were to throw into the intrenchments at a given signal, and set fire to them : and then, as soon as the flames appeared, to retreat in haste, and the colonel himself would be ready with troops to assist them. "Our merit," concluded the order, "may be completed this night. Beheading is the punishment of disobedience." The soldiers murmured assent to the orders, and departed.

It will be remembered that Chaou Ting Heaou had written to the two hèèn of Tsze Yang and Pĭh Ho on the subject of the war. Immediately on the receipt of his letter the civil and military officers, both great and small, were assembled to deliberate. Considering the power of the thieves, they saw that should Shĭh Tseuen be lost, the danger could not be averted

from themselves; for they would be in the condition of the teeth when the lips were destroyed. They therefore commissioned the lieutenant-colonel of the first camp, along with the commandant of a station on the coast, to proceed the same night with eight hundred soldiers from the camp to Shĭh Tseuen hèèn.

While these troops were advancing, the rebels were also in deliberation. After they had retreated to their camp, Ma Wăn Ching held a consultation with Wang Keuen. "To-day," said he, "I observed that the ranks of the enemy during the fight never fell into disorder. They had ability moreover to encamp a corps of relief in case of their getting the worse. It is plain they are no bunglers; and should they attack our camp to-night, when the moon is hidden, and the stars are dark, how shall we meet them?"

"We must suppose that they will attack us," replied Wang Keuen, "and not that they will not. To be prepared for them, you and I had better lie concealed, each with two thousand five hundred men, on the right and

left. The remaining soldiers who continue in the camp must hoist all the flags, and raise a sound as if all the troops were there. If they see the enemy advancing, they can allow them to come as far as possible, and then discharging their signal guns, beating the drums, and waving the flags, sally forth with a loud huzza all at once, and thus deter the royal troops from advancing, and oblige them to flee. At this juncture you and I will rush forth upon them, and the event will surely prove favourable." Wăn Ching having signified his approbation of this plan, they both proceeded to conduct their troops to the ambuscade.

In the mean while Yaou Yŭh Ts'ing approached the rebels' camp with a body of two thousand men. It was now the third drum, and there was not the slightest movement in the intrenchments. Glad of this they proceeded by a bye-path behind them, raised a simultaneous shout, and rushed in. When they reached the middle of the camp, however, without meeting a single officer or soldier, they saw they were entrapped, and wished to make their way

out again. Suddenly there arose in front a tremendous noise of guns, drums, and trumpets, roaring all together. Not knowing the number of their opponents, their first thoughts were to retreat by the same private way they had advanced; but on the right Wăn Ching came upon them, and Wang Keuen on the left, pressing them on both sides. The rebels fought desperately in every direction and succeeded in forming a circle round Yăou Yŭh Ts'ing. Just at the moment of greatest peril, up came Lew King with his troops, by a daring effort broke the circle and rescued the lieutenant. The soldiers then effected a junction, and made head against the two rebel generals.

While they were engaged a bright line suddenly illumined the heavens on one side, and there appeared a body of quickly advancing troops, led by a general with a black helmet, and his body incased in black armour, grasping an iron hafted scymitar, and riding on a black horse. Behind him a soldier bore a black flag, on which was written in white, "Army Protector Ge-

neral Chŭh." At the same time another body came forward at a sharp pace. Their general, completely armed and carrying a spear, was of a majestic and martial appearance, and his large flag bore the inscription, "Commander-in-chief of the Thief-extinguishing soldiers."

Lew King was disconcerted by their arrival, and maintained the battle in a disorderly manner. He soon drew off his troops and retreated, hotly pursued by the whole of the rebel generals.

In the mean time the troops from Tsze Yang and Pĭh Ho had come up. Observing before them the fire flashing to the heavens, and men and horses confusedly struggling, they supposed that the thieves were attacking the city, and pressed forward with eagerness. When they approached they ordered the gates to be thrown open, for that they were the rescue from Tsze Yang and Pĭh Ho. The lieutenant-colonel hearing their words, ascended the watch-tower, and recognising them to be indeed the soldiers of the two hèèn, gave orders that the gates should be

immediately thrown open. While they were about to enter, a large force appeared in their rear. Erroneously supposing that it belonged to the rebels, they turned and attacked it.

This was owing to a stratagem of Lew King. When he was proceeding to attack the enemy's camp, he ordered his own vanguard to assume the dress of the rebels, that the latter might not be able to distinguish them. As they still retained that dress, the troops of the two hèèn naturally thought they were the thieves, and forthwith surrounded the colonel and his men, maintaining a sharp contest with them. Owing to the darkness Lew King could not see whence these soldiers had come to attack him; and after looking eagerly all around, and seeing no way of escape in the front, and that the enemy were pressing on him in the rear, he fled directly towards the camp of Chaou Ting Heaou. The others supposing they had gained a victory felt much inspirited, and were just about commencing a pursuit when up came another body of troops, with whom they

had to recommence the engagement. These were the real rebels, and advancing in great force and fury, like a swarm of bees in the air, the loyal troops could not resist them, but were slaughtered till their dead bodies covered the plain, and their blood flowed in a river. On this they fled without stopping for twenty le, and halting to number their defeated forces, they found that only a few more than two hundred of the cavalry were left. Ashamed to return again to Shĭh Tseuen they proceeded onward with their shattered remnant.

Wang Che Fan in the meantime followed up his victory. Chŭh Yung Peaou was sent with a body of infantry and cavalry to attack Shĭh Tseuen, and Ma Wăn Ching with Wang Keuen was dispatched in pursuit of the troops of the two hèèn.

When Chŭh drew near the city, he found the gate wide open, on which he marched directly in with all his forces. The truth was that when Fan Sz' Kwei saw the soldiers of the two hèèn set off in pursuit of the thieves, he ordered the gate to be left opened for their return, and now mis-

taking the forces which were entering for his friends he came down in haste to meet them, and being entirely off his guard he was cut down at once by Yung Peaou. The inhabitants on hearing of this despaired of their lives. An immense number both of men and women put themselves to death; some hanging themselves, some cutting their throats, some drinking poison, and others throwing themselves into wells. Peaou ordered his soldiers to make prisoners of all. The men he fiercely ordered to submit, and the women to be redeemed on pain of death. He also sent a letter to Che Fan, announcing his success.

We turn now to Ma Wăn Ching. Having proceeded with three thousand men in pursuit of the Tsze Yang troops, he came by and bye nearly up with them. Waving his whip, he cried out, "I do not wish to plunder your city, or slay the inhabitants. My object is to proceed to the capital and destroy Lew Kin and his villanous associates. Return and tell the prefect to open the gates and admit me. If he delays I will first take the city, and then treat all

as belonging to the eunuch's party." The soldiers proceeded home and reported his words to the prefect. That gentleman seeing that they were reasonable, and moreover that he could not hold out against the force of the rebels, thought it best to submit for a time, in order to preserve the lives of the people, and afterwards to think of other measures. He therefore threw the gates wide open, and went forth to receive the enemy. Ma Wăn Ching and he saluted each other. The former observed, that he was merely borrowing a road through Yu to attack Kih, and that the prefect need not be anxious and troubled. On this they entered the city together.

> "With valour and with skill one formed his plan;
> And both were glad to save the people's lives."

CHAP. VIII.

"The daring rebels prosecute the war,
And the poor people bear a thousand ills;
Meanwhile the weak and schemeless magistrate
Begs for his life; but his heroic spouse
Nobly maintains the honour of her name."

MA WAN CHING, after entering the city along with the prefect Tsin Wân Che, treated the inhabitants very gently, and did not permit the slightest violence to be done to their property. In consequence of such conduct a shout of joy spread through the whole place, and he was everywhere welcomed with incense and candles. He also encamped his troops beyond the walls and did not allow them to enter the city or disturb the people. Having made these arrangements, he despatched a letter to Che Fan, announcing his success.

We must now follow up the movements of Wang Keuen, who had set off in pur-

suit of the Pĭh Ho troops. He continued to gain upon them, and by the time they drew near to the city was within a bowshot of them. On this he shot an arrow right forward, which hit the commandant Leang King Kwan behind the ear, so that he reeled on his horse, fell down, and expired. The rest came up to save him, but it was too late, for the thieves came up, scattered them in every direction, and drove them into the wilderness. Wang Keuen then approached, and cut off the commandant's head, and gave orders to his men to attack the city on all sides.

At this time Chin P'un Ching, the prefect of Ho Pih, was drinking wine within his residence, in company with his wife Kwŏ. The lady observed, that she had heard that Wong Che Fan had raised a rebellion in Shĭh Tseuen, and that he himself had received orders from his superior to send troops there to protect the district. "I was afterwards told," said she, "that the commandant Leang King Kwan was despatched with the troops; but though he has been gone some time no

news have arrived from him, and we cannot tell whether the event has turned out well or ill. Considering, however, that our hèèn lies so near to Shĭh Tseuen, if that be lost ours cannot be held out against the thieves; and yet I perceive no appearance of anxiety about you. What line of conduct have you determined on?" "My dear," replied P'un, "you need not trouble yourself about it; the major-general, the Hing Gan foo, the colonel, and the lieutenant, have gone to the rescue of Shĭh Tseuen with eight thousand men; our two hèèn have also sent more than one thousand men to support the others, so that most probably they have cut off the thieves. If they have not proved successful, however, wait till the thieves approach our city, and it will not be too late for me then to go out and submit to them." At these words his wife dashed the cup upon the ground, and upbraided him. "Disgrace to the name of a man," cried she, "you have received the kindness of the kingdom, and now, instead of thinking how to display your fidelity in its defence, you cherish the intention of

submitting to the thieves, even before their approach! Such conduct would be disgraceful even in a woman like me; how much more in the case of you, who are the father of the people?" She had scarcely finished, when one of the attendants knelt down, and announced that their troops had been defeated, the commandant killed by an arrow, and his head cut off by the rebels; and moreover that the thieves, as fierce as a swarm of bees, had approached the city. "What is to be done, your honour?" said the man; but the prefect was so frightened that his hands and feet were all trembling, and he could not speak for fear. Going out, however, to the court-hall, Chin P'un Ching took his seals of office, and then having bound himself, he ordered the city to be thrown open, and went forth to the enemy's camp, offering his submission and confessing his crime. On hearing this multitudes of the people killed themselves; while Wang Keuen, seeing the gates open, ordered his soldiers to rush in at once, and take all the inhabitants prisoners without any exception of sex. When he came to

the prefect's residence he ordered Chin P'un to be brought before him. "Dog of a magistrate," exclaimed he, "you have shown a very great courage. When you saw that our troops had approached your city, and that you had no possibility of escape, you then pretend to proffer your submission, having other schemes in reserve. If you are really sincere in this matter, why did you not come and render up the city before; thus you might have saved your pitiful life, but who cannot see through your present deceit?" Having thus upbraided him, he ordered his attendants to behead him.

> "Once clash'd the sword: the prefect's head
> Is from his shoulders riven;
> Leaving the corpse, his three souls fly
> Up the nine-storied heav'n."

This done the rebel ordered some of the soldiers to proceed behind and secure his family and wealth. In compliance with his orders they commenced a search and found two beautiful concubines and eight servants, besides a large quantity of gold,

silver, and precious things. Seeing one woman, with a crown of honour and an ornamented sash, hanging from a beam, they came out to the hall and told their general. Wang Keuen inquired of the servants who she was, and was told that she was the lady Kwŏ, the third daughter of the noble Kwŏ Yuen, and had hung herself because her husband would not listen to her advice to maintain his fidelity. Wang's compassion was moved, and out of respect to her exalted character, he ordered her to be interred in a hill beyond the hèèn. The following lines have been written in her praise:

> "Heroes are here outshone: a feeble dame
> Feeds, tho 'tis fatal, loyalty's fine flame;
> In pleasure's midst, gladly she welcomes death,
> And shows before high heaven her spotless faith."

The general finding his stock of arms much increased by the plundered stores, immediately sent a flying messenger to request his brother to come to the hèèn, to determine, among other matters, how the people were to be treated.

We must now return to Lew King and Yaou Yŭh Ts'ing, who never halted in their flight till they reached the bottom of Kin Hwa Hill. There they numbered their shattered army, and found that only a few more than two hundred of their cavalry were left. While engaged in this, Chaou Ting Heaou approached with his troops, on which they bound themselves with an oath, and proceeded to his tent to confess their crimes. Before they had opened their mouths, however, an outlooker arrived and informed the general that Shĭh Tseuen had been taken by the rebel general Chŭh Yung Pew; and another brought at the same time news that the prefects of Tsze Yang and Pĭh Ho had submitted to the thieves. The major-general burst into a rage at this information, and fiercely commanded his attendants to carry the two men without the camp and behead them. On hearing this order all his officers advanced and pleaded for the two criminals. "We have heard," said they, "that the number of the rebels amount to several myriads, and that their leaders are able, fierce, and brave, while

Lew and Yaou had only a small body of troops and a few officers. We have heard also that the soldiers of the two hèèn which had been sent to their assistance, through a mistake, attacked and injured their own party, and that the defeat was owing to this circumstance, and not to any crime of these two men. We beg, therefore, that your honour will pardon them."

"It is no wish of mine," replied Ting Heaou, "rashly to kill any man. But as three hèèn have been lost in succession, and the people involved in severe distress, if my superior sends down a declaration of censure against me, how shall I answer him? My best plan will be to send them to the Protector-general Yang Yih Ts'ing, and let him decide about them. I shall, at the same time, send him a letter requesting to transmit a report home to the capital and ascertain the Emperor's will; and, in the mean while, forward a post to the prefect of Hing Gan foo, telling him to increase his troops and maintain the city, while I remain here for a time to guard against any attack from the thieves."

Having determined on these measures, he forthwith inclosed the colonel and the lieutenant in a cage, and sent them to Shen Se.

The day they arrived, the protector-general was in his hall, reflecting on the progress of the rebellion, and while he was feeling perplexed at having received no news from the scene of operations, one of his staff knelt before him, and stated that the major-general of Hing Gan foo had sent forward two criminals, and that they were now waiting for his orders without the gate. The protector having commanded that they should be carried in, the messenger who accompanied them ascended the hall, knelt down, and presented the letter. Yĭh Ts'ing handed the letter to one of his attendants, who opened it and read it aloud from the beginning to the end, after which orders were given to open the cage and let the men come forth. These immediately advanced forward and, after they had expressed their thanks with their heads on the earth, the protector wrote a letter and told them to carry it to the prefect of Se

An foo, who was to send with them 3000 men to the assistance of the major-general. "Manage your business," said he, "with care, and redeem your crimes by your future merits. You must tell the major-general to maintain his camp actively, and see that he meet with no misfortune."

After they had taken leave of him with the same observances he wrote a representation of the circumstances to his majesty, and sent it to the president of the board of war, Ching Ting Yun. His messenger commenced his journey the same day, and as soon as he reached the capital he proceeded to the president's residence. Being introduced by the officer in waiting, he knelt and presented his report, and Ting Yun was no sooner acquainted with the business than he wrote a reply to the protector, and despatched the messenger on his return. Immediately after he prepared his court dress, in order to proceed to the palace and lay the representation before the emperor. And now Lew Kin comes upon the stage again. He had not only contrived to detain his majesty within the palace and

prevent his attendance at the court, but being afraid that the officers might send in a united representation, and that Leang Choo or some of the others would enter the palace to speak with the Queen-dowager, he had set some of his partisans to keep the palace gate, with strict orders to allow none of the officers, whether civil or military, to enter. When Ting Yun drew near to the gate therefore, holding up the representation in his hands, he found a set of these fellows sitting on both sides of it. Advancing and saluting them he inquired respectfully where his majesty was. "The Emperor," replied they, "is busy in the Yang Han palace. Why do you want, sir, to enter the palace?" "I have a representation," said Yun, "to lay before him. As I have business to transact, you will excuse my not sitting with you." With these words he moved his sleeves and went in. The fellows, however, advanced and stopped him. "His majesty," said they, "has decreed that none of the officers shall be admitted to his audience. Have you not seen the imperial tablet to that

effect suspended without the palace?" "Were the representation of a different kind," replied the president, "it would not matter, but here is important business concerning the frontiers, which can neither be delayed for an hour, nor determined without his majesty. Good bye! good bye!" The others, however, would not let him enter, but kept him back, saying, "The Emperor has commanded us to keep the gate, and allow no officer, whether great or small, to enter. Since your representation contains such important matter, you can leave it here, and we will present it when his majesty has leisure. Then tomorrow, when he attends the court, you settle the matter."

Chin Ting Yun, seeing that they would not let him carry in his representation, fell into a furious rage, and exclaimed, "I am a great officer of the six boards, with all the boarding-passes under my jurisdiction. If I may not enter the palace and see his majesty who may? And if his majesty were occupied with any business should I not know it? Plainly it is the company

of such villains as you who introduce curious amusements, and darken and dissipate the royal mind. To no purpose have we a hall of audience; and the administration of the empire is neglected, all in consequence of your crimes. If his majesty awake hereafter, listen to loyal advice, and chop the carcases of all your crafty party into a thousand pieces, then shall I be satisfied." While thus he quarrelled with them,

> "Sudden fierce rage bore up his cap of state,
> Nor cared the hero, though he met his fate."

CHAP. IX.

"Rous'd by the dangers war had spread around
The border keeps, the upright man was found
Entering the palace, bent with truth severe,
To purge from flatt'ring lies his sovereign's ear.
Alas! the roguish crew withstood his way,
And pain and death his loyalty repay."

THE quarrel between Chin Ting Yun and these villains brought out Lew Kin to see what was the matter. Being informed how the minister had been insulting and railing at them, and seeing him tossing his arms, stamping his feet, and abusing himself, his wolfish nature was excited, and he immediately ordered the fellows to knock out Ting Yun's front teeth, and then ask him whether he could still vent his abuse or not. The order was forthwith complied with; and the minister's mouth was filled with blood, and he suffered intolerable pain. Being alone he could not make

head against so many, but still he continued confusedly and vehemently to abuse them. Thinking that if he died there his son and daughter would not allow the villains to pass unpunished, he advanced with the determination either to kill or to be killed. At this moment, however, Lew Kin ordered the gate to be shut, and re-entered the palace. This so inflamed Ting Yun that his eyes seemed to be leaping from their sockets. Unable to declare his wrong, he gave three loud cries, dashed his head against the gate, and expired.

The attendants instantly reported this to the eunuch, who was alarmed. Having ordered them to break in pieces the tablet denying audience, he proceeded to the Emperor, and there falsely represented to him that Chin Ting Yun had presumed, without his majesty's summons, to enter the precincts of the palace, had abused the great officers, and, throwing contempt upon his majesty, had broken the tablet denying audience into pieces. Finally, that seeing he had trespassed against heaven, when prayer could do nothing for him, he

had dashed himself to death without the palace with the intent of criminating his majesty's servants. The Emperor, believing the statement to be true, gave orders that the minister's body should be kept without the palace in a coffin till the morrow, when he should go to the court and seize and condemn all his family.

In the mean while the servants of Chin Ting Yun returned to acquaint his wife and son with all that had befallen their master. The minister himself was upwards of sixty years at the time of his death, and his wife was a daughter of Yëe Chang Chun, governor of Hoo Nan, and a native of Kwang Chow foo, in Kwang Jung. They had only two children: a son named Fei Heung, now nineteen years of age, and a daughter named Mei Yen, at present no more than seventeen. These two were devotedly attached to each other; they pursued the same studies,—literature during the spring and summer, and martial exercises during the autumn and winter. They were equally versed in all the arts which could fit them either for war or

peace, and together capable of standing against ten thousand men.

When the servants arrived they were sitting in the middle hall along with their mother discussing a work on military science, and were taken quite by surprise. With the traces of tears still wet upon their cheeks, the servants recounted on their knees the story of their master's wrongs. A moment before and they were full of cheerfulness, but now their souls fled from their bodies;

> "Their throats were changed to smokeless guns,
> And fire within their bowels burn'd."

All burst into a simultaneous cry, and fell down in the hall as dead. The servants ran forward to save them; but it was too late for the mother, who was too old and feeble to survive the shock. The son and daughter, however, gradually revived; but when they saw their other parent dead also, oil was poured upon the flame of their wrath. Thenceforth it became unquenchable, and made the hair of their heads stand on end. Summoning the domestics

before them they gave them orders to prepare the body for burial, and then to lay it in the earth in the garden behind, beneath the moon-surveying arbour, setting up a stone at the same time to mark the place. "That done," said they, "you must divide the property among yourselves, and save your lives by flight. We have the greatest wrongs to avenge, and can no longer remain with you here." At these words all knelt down, and cried with tears, "We cannot forget the kindness with which you have nourished us; and now that you present to us your property, though our bones should be ground to powder, we shall ever remember it. But whither will our young master and mistress go. We desire to follow you for we cannot leave you."

"You cannot part with me," replied the young man, "and how can I part with you? But no alternative is left for us by circumstances. The ancients have said that one must not live under the same heaven with the enemy of his father; and it is not for me, therefore, to look uncon-

cernedly upon these events, or as if I had never heard of them. My sister and I will proceed at once to the palace and cut off these crafty villains, thus delivering the people from their oppressors, and consoling our parents in another world. You must not delay, but prevent calamity by leaving this directly."

The domestics on this complied with his commands, and with tearful eyes and grateful hearts proceeded to save their lives. In the meantime the young man and his sister turned to the body of their mother, and knelt before it weeping. "Mother," said they, "you have tended and nourished us with unbounded kindness, and we have no means to express our gratitude. Forgive our undutifulness in not being able to celebrate your funeral, and to observe the customary rites — for we shall instantly proceed to the city, and avenge our father of his enemies. Mother, we pray that you will show your divinity in assisting your children to exterminate the villanous crew, and assuage the wrath of our venerated parent. Let us but accomplish this, and

we shall instantly pass to the grave without regret."

Having thus announced their wishes they both burst into a violent fit of weeping; after which they arose, put on their armour, proceeded with their respective weapons directly to the royal city, and made for the palace gate with the fierceness of tigers.

The servants having found it impossible to stop them immediately, took the body of their mistress, and buried it as they had been commanded. After weeping and worshipping at the grave for some time, they reentered the house, divided every article of furniture among themselves in the hall, and then separated for their lives, each one with his portion.

While these things were going on, Lew Kin, with his eight associates, was consulting in the palace about getting a decree to seize the whole family of Chin Ting Yun. In the midst of their deliberations, the president's two children, grasping their weapons, and in a towering rage, fiercely entered the precincts of the palace. When

they approached the gate they were stopped and interrogated by the porters; but without answering a word, they knocked them to the ground, and passed through searching eagerly for Lew Kin. As they drew near to the second gate they were observed by the eunuch's personal attendants, who suspected their intentions, and wanted to shut the door. Chin Fei Heung, however, saw their movement at a glance, rushed forward, with a single wave of his spear caused the whole crew to stand apart on both sides, and with an inflamed spirit passed between their ranks into the royal residence. On this the attendants seized their weapons, and pursued them, but the young man and his sister went straight forward, looking on every side without being able to discover where the eunuchs had concealed themselves. Just at this moment, Gwei Yung, one of the officers in attendance in the inner palace, came out, and was laid hold of by Fei Heung.

"Where is the scoundrel, Lew Kin?" said the young man. "Quickly tell me, and I will spare your dog's life; but if you

do not speak, I will not bear with you a moment." With this he placed his spear before the throat of the eunuch, who hastily said that Lew Kin was now in the Ease-nourishing Palace. The other inquired the way leading to it, which was no sooner pointed out than he threw the eunuch from him, and advanced as upon wings along the path followed by his sister. Yung rolled down the steps like a ball, but instantly raised himself up, and when his consternation was subsided, he concluded, after careful reflection, that the two must be the children of Chin Ting Yun come to avenge their father. It seemed to him, however, that they would be unable to resist the number of their enemies, and that their exit being more difficult than their entrance, the posterity of the faithful minister would be entirely cut off. To prevent such a catastrophe he determined to go quickly and acquaint Leang Choo with the case, and ask him to form some plan to rescue the two young people. With this resolution he instantly left the palace, and hastened towards the statesman's residence.

By this time Fei Heung and his sister had run to the apartment mentioned, where his majesty and the crafty associates were sitting. When these observed the couple, fierce as wolves or tigers, with deep indignant countenances, and grasping weapons in their hands, they knew that they were come with no good intention, and instantly tried to make their escape: but the young man holding fast his silver spear, rushed forward and raised his weapon without any distinction of individuals; his sister with two rods of steel in her hands advancing along with him, to the great dismay of his majesty and the villains, insomuch that their souls departed, and their spirits were scattered abroad.

Leaving their seats in confusion they ran round the pillars to escape the fury of the avengers, for Fei Heung no sooner recognised his enemies than rage came out of his heart, and courage was produced from his gall. As he pursued them, he pierced the back of Kŭh Tae Yung with such strength that the point of his spear came out in front. Not content with this

he plucked out the spear, and pierced his victim a second time in the back part of his skull, so that the blood gushed forth, and the eunuch fell down dead. When Mei Yen saw that her brother had killed his enemy so quickly she came forward to second him with her two rods, lashing all she met. Ma Yung Shing unable to shun her received a blow upon his thigh, which caused him to cry out, and brought him to the ground in a swoon, on which the lady commenced beating his skull with all her might, so that the blood spouted forth with the velocity of an arrow, and his forehead was all smashed to pieces.

These proceedings threw his majesty, Lew Kin, and the others, into great terror, and, having succeeded in gaining the inner palace, they shut the door, and repaired to the Queen-dowager to acquaint her with the circumstances. On hearing them her majesty immediately ascended the Cloud-reaching gallery, for the purpose of observation, and, as she had been told, found a young hero and heroine boiling with rage, and using every effort to get into the inner

palace. Raising her voice, she inquired who they were, and who had incited them to enter the palace, terrify his majesty, and murder the great officers. Was it that they did not know the laws? The brother and sister had advanced with eager steps to the inner palace; but having found the door firmly shut, they were intending to break it open, when they were suddenly arrested by the voice. They lifted up their heads to see who it was, and no sooner saw a lady with a royal crown and robes than they knew it was the Queen-dowager, and knelt down upon the stairs. The brother then replied to her with a loud voice, saying, "Your mean servant, Fei Heung, has often enjoyed the imperial favour, and is the loyal descendant of loyal ancestors. How should I be unacquainted with the laws? I am here because I cannot live under the same heaven with the murderers of my father, and to avenge, moreover, the death of my mother who died of grief. My father was Chin Ting Yun, president of the board of war, and having under his jurisdiction the military affairs of all the

borders. It was in the course of his duty to lay all the representations which were forwarded to him before his majesty; and what crime was he guilty of this morning in coming with one to the palace? That cunning thief, Lew Kin, however, caused his teeth to be knocked out, so that my father, in a fury, dashed his head against the gate and expired. When the servants brought home the news, it was plain that Lew Kin, in his grasping after the sole power, was deceiving the Emperor, and injuring the loyal and virtuous ministers. My mother, unable to bear the intelligence, instantly burst into a rage and expired; and thus we, brother and sister, are left this day orphans, to become the victims of future calamity. We think not, therefore, of our perishing lives, but have come boldly to the palace, searching for the crafty party, that we may avenge our father. We ought, indeed, to die a thousand deaths for having terrified the sacred person; but we earnestly beseech your majesty to send forth that crew of villains that we may exterminate them. Let us

but accomplish this, and though our bodies be afterwards chopped into ten thousand pieces with a thousand knives, we shall meet death without regret."

The Queen replied to this speech, that in such a case they ought to have sent a representation to the Emperor, and awaited his decision, instead of acting in the way they had done. She moreover advised them to go home for a little, and she herself would settle the matter. In compliance with her advice the young man and his sister, after taking a ceremonious leave, departed; but meeting with the bodies of their two victims, as they were on their way out of the palace, Fei Heung again raised his spear, and kept piercing them until he was interrupted by the approach of a party of the body guard. Inflamed by the sight of the two great officers, Ma and Kŭh, stretched upon the earth, these advanced to take him; but the movement served to excite afresh the spirits of the bold pair, who beat down the soldiers on the right and left.

In the midst of this struggle the high

guardian, Leang Choo, arrived, along with the eunuch who had gone to call him, and separated the combatants. He then inquired minutely into the cause of the quarrel, and having learned from Fei Heung and Mei Yen all the circumstances as they had occurred, he ordered them forthwith to betake themselves to some other place to save their lives, for if they delayed there, they would obtain no mercy. "Don't be anxious," said the venerable minister, "about the burial of your father, for I will see to his coffin; but be gone with all speed."

The two knelt down, and with their faces on the ground thanked him for his kindness and immediately retired. As soon as they were gone Leang Choo proceeded onward, and having ordered the palace gate to be opened obtained an audience of the Emperor. After inquiring about his safety, he reported that the two individuals had gone, and asked the reason of their entering the palace with such boldness. His majesty, however, without waiting to return an answer, went hastily forth to

the apartment to see what had been done. Seeing the attendants groaning, some with their heads broken, and others with their feet wounded, and the bodies moreover of the two eunuchs who had been so cruelly put to death, he fell into a great rage, and immediately commissioned Lew Kin to proceed with a thousand soldiers to the president's house, and put every member of his family, whether great or small, to death. At the same time he ordered the bodies of the two victims to be interred with the ceremonies peculiar to great officers. The minister being acquainted with these things, though he was anxious to plead for the offenders, yet felt that it would be difficult to defend them on account of their own rashness and fury, which had led them to slay his majesty's favourites before his face, so greatly enraging him. He consequently returned to his residence, and contented himself with despatching one of his domestics to watch the future progress of the affair. In less than an hour, this messenger brought word that no traces of the young man and his

sister could be found, and that the eunuch had led back his troops to the palace without finding a single person or thing in the house. Leang Choo on receiving this intelligence was relieved of his anxiety. The Queen-dowager having descended from the gallery, and seen the Emperor, told him that it was all owing to Lew Kin's fault that Chin Fei Heung and Mei Yen had committed such an outrage in the palace, and requested him to pardon them. Ching Tïh replied however that as they had behaved so fiercely as to endanger his own life — for which indeed he was indebted only to his speedy retreat — if he did not punish their crime, he was afraid that others would follow their example. It was impossible therefore to pardon them; and her majesty finding it difficult to reply to his reasoning, retired to her apartments.

While this effort was being made on behalf of the hero and his sister, Lew Kin had proceeded to the residence of Chin Ting Yun. Having first ordered the soldiers to surround the house, and then to break open the door, he advanced to

the middle hall; but as he found no traces of any one there, he sent some of the soldiers forward to the inner apartments to search in every place. These however all came out empty-handed, without having met with a single thing, and kneeling down reported that though they had carefully searched in accordance with his orders, not one individual was to be seen. As they did not know where the people had gone to, they requested his further orders.

The eunuch at this gnashed his teeth and stamped his foot, but there was no help for it. Persuaded that the whole family had effected their escape, he could only return to the court and inform the Emperor. At the same time he besought his majesty to despatch a party in pursuit, and accordingly immediate orders were given to Tseaou Fang, the high guardian of the crown prince, to set out from the capital, and to pursue after those traitors without intermission, day or night. At the same time he ordered likenesses to be drawn of both the offenders, which were instantly engraved in wood, and copies

promulgated throughout the empire. These were hung up in the market-places of every province; and it was promised that whoever should take these two traitors Chin Fei Heung and Mei Yen, and bring them to the capital, whether he was a soldier or a common man, the Emperor would reward him with a thousand taels of gold, and appoint him over ten thousand houses.

No sooner was this decree sent down than Tseaou Fang left the capital with his troops and commenced the pursuit.

> "And thus the passion of a single hour
> Had nearly ruined the whole family."

CHAP. X.

"The hero's is no little sphere:
The wide world is his dower,
As the arbutus in every place
Puts forth the same bright flower.
The city's pleasant joys no more
On Heung and Mei Yen smile:
Yet gaily mid the mountains, they
The passing days beguile."

THOUGH Fei Heung and his sister were flying from the capital, they had no particular place in view to which they might retire. Being afraid moreover that the eunuchs would despatch a party in pursuit of them, they were reduced to no little perplexity, when Mei Yen observed that they had better go to Hoo Nan for the present, to their mother's brother, and there decide about their future movements. Her brother having expressed his consent, they bent their steps towards that province. When they drew near, however,

to the borders of Tsing Chow Fóo in Shan Tung, a band of robbers, each armed with a sword, sallied forth from a high hill in their front, and stopped them. The leader inquired who they were that they dared to pass by that hill, and ordered them quickly to pay their passage-money, threatening if they delayed to break their legs. The youth smiled at his words, and inquired what mountain he belonged to, requesting a speedy answer while he brought out his money. The other asked him with a laugh whether he did not know Pwan T'een, Fei T'ëë Ken, the chief captain of the universally celebrated "dragon-collecting mountain."

"This being the case," said Fei Heung, "you can come and take these two pieces of gold which are at my foot." T'ëë Ken, suspecting no trick, advanced forward to take the gold, when the other hastily withdrew his foot, threw him on the ground, and placed the foot upon his back. The robbers enraged at this advanced to rescue their leader; but the hero raised his spear and tossed them about like so many balls

rolling on the ground, so that as soon as they recovered their legs they made the best of their way back to the mountain. In these circumstances their captain exclaimed, "Where were my eyes that I could not know the T'ae mountain? I beseech your heroship to spare my life!" Fei Heung on this granted his request, on condition that he should speedily ascend the mountain, and tell his commander to come down and maintain a trial of strength with himself.

T'ëë Ken instantly arose, and ran towards the mountain. He proceeded without stopping to the "gold-dividing porch," and beat the hall drum till he had brought out the commander, Wan Jin Teih, and his sister, Sew Chun, to see what was the matter. He then knelt down, and gave a true account of what had occurred, concluding by saying, "He spared my life, charging me to return to the mountain and report to your excellency that if you were a man of ability you should descend and try your strength with his." Wan Jin Teih instantly donned his armour, and

taking a bright-mounted knife in his hand, summoned his followers to descend the hill along with him, and take the braggart. At the same time he fired three signal-guns, and commenced his descent. No sooner was he gone than his sister, fearing he might have the worst, armed herself, mounted on horseback, and followed with a trusty blade to his assistance.

By this time the two fugitives had commenced their route afresh; but hearing the signal-guns behind them they looked round, and saw a number of people, some on horseback, in pursuit of them. On this they drew to one side of the road, where the brother stood with his spear ready for a conflict. "Who are you," shouted Wan Jin Teih, "who have dared me to the combat? Quickly declare your name, and receive death." "Since you have the courage," cried the other, in as fierce a tone, "let us fight. What matter names?"

At these words the robber-chief, in a great passion, raised his knife, and aimed a blow at the face of his antagonist, who

warded it off with his spear. The two men then threw into the combat all the energy of their heroic spirits, and maintained a desperate struggle. They closed more than ten times without either getting the better, but at last Fei Heung, pretending to offer his enemy an advantage, by means of a movement like that which a falling horseman practises, whisked off the helmet of the other. Jin Teih immediately wheeled round his horse and rode off, but Heung kept close at his heels. At this moment Sew Chun came up to the assistance of her brother, which was no sooner perceived by Mei Yen than she advanced to oppose her, brandishing her two rods. While these two were maintaining a violent and equal contest, Jin Teih, alarmed by the near approach of his antagonist, drew his bow from its case, and discharged an arrow at him. The hero, however, escaped this by slipping on one side, and at the same time he made a blow with his spear which hit the other's horse on the foreleg, so that the animal in a fright threw its rider on the ground.

Heung instantly approached and raised him up, requesting that he would pardon him for his offence. The other, surprised at such conduct, behaved with equal politeness, and returned thanks for his life. While they were thus talking they observed their sisters engaged in a close and fierce struggle, and advanced and separated the two heroines.

This done, Wan Jin Teih observed to the other, "May I be so bold as to ask your high surname and name, and that you will tell me particularly the reasons of your coming here?" Fei Heung told him at once all the preceding circumstances, on hearing which the robber apologised for the disrespect which he had shown them in ignorance of their quality, and further inquired whither they were proceeding.

"We are now going," said the hero, "to Hoo Nan, to remain concealed in the house of my mother's brother, Yëë Chang Chun."

"But since you committed such an outrage in the palace," replied Jin Teih, "and killed those great officers, Lew Kin

will certainly request his majesty to have your likenesses drawn, and despatched to every province, in order to secure your apprehension. You now wish to go to your uncle's expecting to find an asylum, but, since his domestics and attendants are many, should it once get out that you are there, what will be the consequences?"

"Things being as they are," said Heung with a sigh, "I can think of no plan, but must await the determination of Heaven." And having thus spoken he was dissolved in tears.

Jin Teih was filled with pity, especially when he considered his youth and heroism. Revolving the subject in his mind," he observed, "I have one thing to suggest, but know not whether it will please you."

"Let me request you," answered the young man, "to speak it out."

Thus encouraged, Teih proceeded to unfold his views. "When I observe," said he, "your youth and heroism, my reverence is raised to the highest pitch, and I feel desirous of contracting an alli-

ance with you for life and death, so that we can remain together collecting soldiers and horses, till some movement of the villanous eunuchs afford us an opportunity of avenging your father. Does this plan meet your views?" "It affords me," replied his friend, "incontestable evidence of your regard, in securing which I am exceedingly fortunate; only I can never play the part of a robber. Excuse me, and tell me your honourable surname and name, that I may treasure them in my memory. Perhaps another day I shall find occasion to inquire after you."

"You are in a mistake," rejoined Lin Teih, "my sister and I have not without reason betaken ourselves to this sylvan trade. My father was attached to the court, and having a difference with those villains, was slandered and injured by them, on which I made my way to this lofty mountain, and assumed the name and position of a chief: but, though we take purses, we are regulated by principle, and permit no improper murder. My real object indeed is to collect around me from

every quarter a number of heroic spirits, to redress the wrongs and punish the injuries of the common people. And now when I learned from your account that you are in a similar condition to myself, I was anxious that at a future time we should unite our strength to exterminate that horde of rogues; thus avenging our parents, and relieving our pent-up wrath. It was on this account that I ventured to form those high hopes. If you do not reject my proposal, but contract with me as your brother, and form an alliance for life and for death, I shall be content to follow you as my leader."

When Fei Heung perceived from the preceding narrative that Wan Jin Teih was, like himself, the child of a faithful minister, and was moreover the subject of similar wrongs, he instantly complied with his proposal, inquiring at the same time his surname and name, which the other instantly announced, as well as those of his sister. Full of joy at Heung's compliance, he also ordered his band forthwith to lead the way back to the mountain. He him-

self took the hand of his new friend, and proceeded with him to the "gold-dividing porch." There they sat down in company with the two ladies, and after they had partaken of some fragrant tea, Teih recommenced the former subject by asking Fei Heung's age, who apologised for not having put a similar question to him, and added that he had vainly passed through twenty years. "So young," said the other, "and yet so heroic, you make me ashamed that I am four years your elder. In sooth I am like the worthless Choo Leihkua, devoid of the least ability."

On hearing his seniority Heung paid him the respect due to an elder brother, and yielded him the upper seat. They then gave orders that the incense table should be prepared; and having both lighted the candles and burned incense, they went forth to the open air, and having paid homage to the gods, invoked their presence. They then pledged to each other the affections of brothers, and swore that nothing should be permitted to disturb their harmony. This done, they returned

to their seats, when the two ladies drew near and paid their respects.

Sew Chun then smiled and opened her peachy lips. "I also," said she, "wish to contract a sistership with this lady, and only wait for the approbation of our brothers, and her assent to my desire." At these words Mei Yen smiled, observing, that it would be the height of her good fortune to be allowed continually to wait upon her, but as to speaking about contracting as sister, she was ashamed that she was altogether unworthy of the honour. Jin Teih, however, interrupted her, saying, "Young lady, don't be so modest. The events of this day must be ascribed to the overruling providence of Heaven. You must not deny my sister's proposal." Having spoken thus, he ordered them both to burn incense, and to form their alliance in the face of heaven. The two ladies accordingly, having first knelt to the gods, asked one another's age, and Sew Chun, proving to be one year the elder, was honoured by Yen with the due observances, and the engagement contracted.

These things being ended, Wan Jin Teih summoned his band from every one of their encampments, to pay their respects to their new friends; when all were collected, he issued his commands in the hall, that whatever orders might be given by them hereafter on the mountain, they should be instantly complied with. The robbers having received this commission, Fei Heung instantly changed the name of the mountain from that of "dragon-collecting" into "hero-collecting." The "gold-dividing porch" was altered to the "worthies' assembling porch;" the "slaughter booth" into the "booth for redressing wrong;" and the "flaying porch" took the name of "sorrow-banishing." He also charged the men no longer to go down and plunder the villages, but to cultivate the mountain itself; and despatched some of them in every direction to obtain news about the court. When these matters were arranged, a party was set to kill pigs and sheep, and they feasted it merrily on the mountain.

At this time there was a man of very superior character resident in Tung Ping

Chow, of Keang Nan province, bearing the surname and name of Chow Yung. His father Chow Yung followed the trade of a merchant to the capital, and therefore removed with all his house to the neighbourhood, and settled in Fung Jun hèèn. Unfortunately for his family he died in the second year of Ching Tih, and the little money that he left being consumed by the expenses of his burial, his wife and son were left in a very destitute condition. Being moreover without friends to help them, Chow Yung was compelled to adopt the calling of a wood-cutter in order to get their livelihood. Every moment of leisure, however, was devoted to archery and horsemanship, to which he was vehemently devoted. The consequence was, that he made himself master of eighteen military arts, and was himself able to overcome ten thousand men.

The same year that the events above narrated concerning Fei Heung and his sister took place, the mother fell sick and died. Yung was exceedingly distressed by the event; and, to add to his sorrow,

he was not possessed of a single cash; so that the only way in which he could obtain a little money to defray the expense of a coffin and other things, was by exposing the articles of his household furniture to sale in the street. He could not restrain his grief at the thought of such a proceeding, and wept bitterly by his mother's corpse. After a while, however, he dried his tears, and proceeded to the market-place.

We must now introduce another resident of the same hèèn, a strong man, with the surname and name of Kin Tŏ Gaou. After the death of his parents he had married a wife of the surname of Wang. Being poor he kept cows for a livelihood. His wife and he were very fond of each other, and both of them well skilled in all martial exercises.

The same day that Chow Yung went to sell his furniture, Tŏ Gaou was feeding his cattle on the brow of the Gea Hae hill, when he saw a man with the most sorrowful aspect passing by in front of him with great haste, and let fall something

from his person. Tŏ instantly approached and picked up the article, which proved to be a bundle of money amounting to about three taels. Having deposited it in his breast, he said to himself, "That man passed by as if he were flying: he must be on some important urgent business. Whence he got this money I cannot tell; but I had better wait here till he comes back seeking it, and then inquire about the circumstances and give it him back."

Leaving Tŏ Gaou in the road, we again take up the history of Chow Yung, who had sold his furniture in the market-place for three taels and five cash. When he had got the money he returned with all speed to his home, to arrange the business of the burial, but in putting his hand into his breast to take out the money it was gone. He felt again and again, but it was not to be found. His face turned the colour of earth with fright, and he fell down on the ground in a swoon, his body bereft of its guiding lord. "Without money," says the Shoo King, "there is no means of pleasure." The ancients all had

need of it, and how should Chow Yung be an exception to their rule? In the course of about ten minutes the swoon left him; on which he burst into a flood of tears, and then tried to recollect where he had lost the money. Unable to do this, with the traces of his tears upon his face, and in a most sorrowful condition, he retraced his steps, seeking for it. All along the front of the mountain he searched with the utmost care, and proceeded back to the market-place. Thence he returned to the foot of the hill, exceedingly distressed with his exertions in running from one side to the other. Tŏ Gaou, seeing his hurried manner, approached and asked what he had lost that occasioned him so much anxiety and searching. The poor man, at this question, acquainted the other with his condition and loss, asking him in conclusion, whether such a combination of calamities were not sufficient to kill him; and, when his narration was ended, he could not restrain a burst of weeping. On this Tŏ Gaou said to him, "Assuage your grief, for this money was picked up by me;

and since you are in such distress I instantly return it." With these words he returned him the money just as it had been lost. Chow Yung was overcome with gratitude, and inquired the surname and name of his benefactor; "for," said he, "I shall treasure them in my memory, and hereafter display the extent of my gratitude." "So little a thing," replied Tŏ Gaou, "is not worth being talked about." He answered his inquiries, however, and put similar ones to him; and also concerning his residence. Yung informed him on all these points; and added, that though his body were torn in pieces in his service it would not be enough to reward such righteousness as had been exhibited to him; but if he should ever be favoured by fortune hereafter, he would return and express his thanks. Struck with his filial piety, and moreover having heard before of his heroic spirit, Tŏ Gaou was desirous to contract a friendship with him, and observed, "Since your mother is dead, I will come myself to-morrow and mourn for her." "I am indebted," replied Yung, "for your kind-

ness, but dare not put you to so much trouble." With these words he took his leave, and went to buy a coffin, and get ready some clothes; after which he returned home and set about the business of the burial.

The day after Tŏ Gaou came to him with a gift, and remained for some time condoling with him. This made Yung grateful, and impressed his kindness more deeply on his memory, so that when the funeral was over he paid him one day a visit. "Your kindness," said Yung, "reaching even to my mother, cannot be forgotten through the lapse of ages. I have ventured to form the desire to contract an alliance with you which death shall not be able to dissolve. What are the views of your honour on the subject?"

Tŏ Gaou was delighted with the proposal, on which they inquired each other's age. Gaou being twenty-eight, and Yung no more than twenty-three, the former received the honours due to the elder. After this they knelt, he on the left and Yung on the right, and worshipped in the

face of heaven, while the latter declared their engagement in the following terms:—

"I here, Chow Yung, and my senior kin, engage by oath to be devoted brothers. Though our surnames be not the same, we shall be to one another as if we were children of one mother. Our friendship is for no purpose of wickedness or for mutual aid in crime, but the resolute intention of us both is to delight in justice, and not give way to feelings of unrighteousness. We shall encourage each other to what is good, and warn each other from what is evil. Hereafter, should we find our way to the court, we shall together become pillars of the empire, that we may leave a fragrant memorial for the historian, and our names be together exhibited to the nation. Should riches and honour fall in future to the lot of either of us, he shall share the glory with the other. If either be false to this agreement, may the gods mark him!"

Having finished their worship, they arose and conversed together again for a while, after which they bowed to each other and

separated. Two days after Chow Yung came to his friend's, and ascended the hall in order to pay his respects to Wang as his sister-in-law. The lady, however, would not receive his homage, but only his affection. From this time the two men maintained a constant intercourse, as close and confidential as glue with varnish. Their views and feelings were the same, without distinction of *meum* and *tuum:* perfect unanimity also characterised their conversations, which turned generally on military matters and heroes.

"When least he hoped, he found a helping friend;
That meeting unforeseen made two hearts one."

CHAP. XI.

"Wretch is the man, who, gaining fortune's height,
Rejects the wife that cheer'd him in his toil,
Or shuns the friend who bore with him the weight
Of pinching want, mid honour's brilliant spoil.
The name of Sung Hung envy does not soil;
Its brightening fame descends to present days;
But had he put away his wife, whose smile
Blessed his hard fare, and smoothed his thorny ways,
He would not now be hailed with men's resounding praise."

We must now for a time leave these two attached friends, amid their constant intercourse, and turn ourselves again to Tseaou Fang. That individual, as we have related, left the capital with a party of soldiers in pursuit of Fei Heung and Mei Yen. Being anxious to obtain the merit of capturing them, he was unwilling to abandon the pursuit, but continued it to the distance of eighty le from the capital, when he reached the Gea Hae Hill in Tung Jun hèèn, on the borders of Shing King. Here was a

plain from which the road diverged on the right and on the left, without a single tree to afford one any shelter. Unable to conceive where the two fugitives could be concealed, and perceiving that it would be vain to pursue them any further, he issued orders to the soldiers to take advantage of the open ground, and give the signal to halt and prepare their food.

While they were thus engaged, Tŏ Gaou happened to be conducting his cattle to a field in the vicinity, with the intention of proceeding afterwards to Chow Yung's. The animals, however, were frightened at the noise of the signal-guns, and two of them, further startled by the crowd of men and horses, broke the ropes by which they were held, and ran right among the troops. The men in a fright ran out of the way in every direction, and commenced reviling Tŏ Gaou, who, on his part, came quickly forward, and taking first the one ox and then the other by the horns, held them fast, and led them back to a tree, where he bound them. Tseaou Fang was on horseback at the time, and perceived the boldness and

the strength which thus held separate two oxen. Pleased with the sight, he ordered the man to call the cattle-keeper to his presence. Tŏ Gaou, on receiving the message, came forward and knelt on the ground, when the general, complimenting him on his strength, asked his surname and name, and how he happened to be resident in that place. Gaou told him his name, adding that he was a native of that district, that both his parents were dead, and that, prevented by his poverty from following any trade, he was obliged to keep cattle for his livelihood. He then entreated pardon on account of the alarm which his oxen had occasioned among the soldiers, but Tseaou Fang said that no offence could be taken from the senseless animals, and asked him whether he was acquainted with military arts. Gaou replied that he had some knowledge of every one of them, on which the other asked why he did not enter the army, seeing that he was endowed with such abilities. He would there be supported, and his talents would not be hid. The other, however, replied that he was so

poor that nobody would put him forward. Fang upon this surveyed his person carefully, and perceiving that he was indeed a strong and tall fellow, he resolved, as Lew Kin at that time had no attendants of valour, to take him back with him, and present him to the eunuch; for, if he proved worthy of employment, his strength would render him a valuable assistant. He said, therefore, to the herdsman, "Suppose I should wish to take you with me to the capital, where you could display your merit and make your fortune, would you be willing to go with me?"

"My desires," said Gaou, "are for glory, and to transmit a bright fame to posterity: and now that I get your honour's assistance, such fortune is enough for three lives. How should I not go with you?" "This being the case," rejoined the general, "let us at once commence our march."

Tŏ Gaou at these words knelt with his face to the earth, but said, "These cattle I must first return to their owner; afterwards I will follow you, and carry your

whip. Let me beseech your honour to advance slowly with your dragon steed, and I will soon overtake you."

To this Tseaou Fang assented, and commanded his soldiers to commence their march back, which they did at a very leisurely pace. In the mean time Gaou returned with the cattle to his house, and acquainted his wife with what had occurred. He told her to drive the cattle to their pen, and charged her very carefully to guard her person, and keep close to the house; "for," said he, "if I meet with good fortune, I shall send a man to come and bring you to me, that we may together enjoy the glory and splendour."

This speech of her husband filled Wang with joy. "When you are gone," said she, "the great object which you should keep in view is to maintain your character and shun dissolute pleasures. I shall manage here very well, so that you need not make yourself anxious about me. I hope you will obtain the favour of his majesty, so as speedily to send me tidings of good, and relieve my anxious feelings. Do

not reject the wife of your poverty." These advices she repeated again and again, and then accompanied him to the door, where they separated.

After bidding his wife farewell, Tŏ Gaou bent his steps to Chow Yung's, and acquainted him with the circumstances which we have related above. The sorrow of his brother was converted into joy by the intelligence. "I hope," said he, "you will soon become known to the court, and so comfort my heart. I shall remain here, beating my cap with the most eager hopes of your recommendation." To this Gaou replied, that should he find fortune favourable, he would certainly send for him. As the great man was waiting, however, he could not remain longer with him, and after paying homage to the spirit of his friend's mother, he took his leave, and commenced his journey in great haste.

When he had come up with the party, he approached the commander's horse, and again did him reverence, after which he followed to the capital. On reaching the city, Tseaou Fang gave orders that the

troops should encamp, while he himself entered the palace to give a report of the expedition. This done he conducted Tŏ Gaou to see Lew Kin, and then returned with him to his own residence. There he ordered him during the day time to practise military arts, and at night to study books on war; and in this occupation we must leave him for a time.

The same year in which these things took place there was an unfriendly movement in the foreign and tributary nation of Ton Kin. Woo Lan Hŏ Tă, the barbarian monarch of that state, had heard that the young sovereign of China had since his accession reposed his confidence only in some slanderous officers, and that the faithful ministers had applied for their dismissal from the court. When the time of paying his tribute drew near therefore, he felt inclined to raise soldiers and make an incursion into the Chinese borders, but before commencing the expedition he summoned all his great officers to a conference in his palace. After these had all rendered to him their homage, they

inquired what business his majesty had in view that he had called them all together.

"I have heard," said the barbarian, "that Ching Tĭh of the celestial court is cruel and oppressive to his faithful officers, so that his empire is now devoid of generals of valour. I am therefore desirous to attack him, and take possession of that central flowery land. But what think you, my nobles, about it?"

On this the prime minister Hŏ Lă Tsing A advanced and said, "The plan is not good. Although the young sovereign has no right principles of government, and reposes his confidence in those crafty ministers, there are still Leang Choo and Le Tung Yang conducting the administration. The borders moreover are under the care of Yang Yĭh Ts'ing. If war be once commenced, the consequences will not be small. In my humble opinion our best plan will be to take one of our *dragon-fighting* horses, enclose him in an iron cage, and send him along with the *cloud-girdle* and the *stream-calling* veils, by the hands of two messengers, as our tribute.

We may then inform the Emperor and his ministers, that if they can overcome that horse and reduce him to obedience, we shall send our tribute every year; but if they are unable to vanquish him, they must equally divide the border territory with us. If they do not comply with this request, it will not be too late for us to make war upon them. I pray your majesty to listen to these statements."

The barbarian monarch was delighted, and his dragon countenance was radiant with pleasure. He signified his approbation of the proposed measures, and instantly commanded two officers of different rank to proceed to the imperial court with the articles of tribute, under a guard of two hundred well-trained soldiers. He further ordered them to set out that very day, and to watch with care the movements of the Emperor and his ministers.

The two men received their commission, prepared the articles of tribute, and the same day, escorted as proposed, left the barbarian territories, and took their route directly to the celestial court. Marching

in the day, and resting at night, they reached the capital in course of time. Here their advance was stopped by the interposition of some troops, who received their letters, and conveyed them to the office of the Six Boards. Orders were here given that a port-house should be prepared for the residence of the ambassadors, while their escort was confined to a certain place, with a guard to keep watch over it, and prevent any suspicious movements. These things settled, the officers of the board proceeded in a body with the letters to the palace in order to lay them before the Emperor. His majesty ordered that the officers, civil and military, should be acquainted with the arrival of the embassy, and that they should repair next day to the hall of audience. Accordingly next day all appeared at the golden gate, when indeed they found the Emperor descending to the court, with the royal incense floating, the great fan outspread, and pipes and flutes all sounding. When they had paid their homage and taken their places in their respective ranks, his majesty issued

his silken sounds, and commanded the crier to summon the ambassadors to his presence. On receiving this order, the two men came quickly forward, paying their homage to him as the Lord of ten thousand Years. His majesty told them to cease their motions, and then asked for a true statement of the reasons for which they had come. The ambassadors replied that they had come for two reasons; first, to inquire about his majesty's welfare, and secondly to present him as tribute two precious veils. At his request these articles were then handed to the throne by the attendants, and his majesty asked their properties and names. The men on this knelt down before him and said, "The red one is called the 'cloud-girdle.' If a man wrap this round his head, he will be able to fly. The white one is called the 'river caller,' for with it a man may call water enough to form a long river; and then by repeating the words of a charm, he can walk and run upon the surface. Such being their

qualities, they are worthy to be termed pearls for a feast."

His majesty's countenance expressed the liveliest joy at this account, when the ambassadors ordered the 'dragon-contending' horse to be carried into the hall. Ching Tĭh surveyed the animal, and observing his eyes bright as lightning, his long teeth sharp as swords, his parti-coloured skin, and his claws as strong as iron, and his whole appearance very fierce and dangerous, he inquired for what purpose they had brought him there. At this question one of them produced a letter from his sleeve and presented it. Its perusal threw the young monarch into great consternation, and made him lose his colour. He handed it to an attendant, charging him to take care of it, and then dismissed the assembly, giving orders to the ambassadors to return to the port-house. He himself moved his sleeves and returned to the palace, whither he was followed by the ministers, to ascertain the cause of this strange procedure. As soon as they had signified their object, he showed them the letter, after reading

which they looked each other in the face, without suggesting any plan. The Emperor was exceedingly downcast, and said to them, "I observed the beast was very fierce, and cannot be subdued by a person of ordinary strength. At present there is no individual of sufficient daring for such a fight in the court; and my best plan will be to issue a proclamation summoning hither all soldiers of ability. How does this seem to my nobles?"

The high guardian of the Emperor, Leang Choo, on this advanced from his rank and said, "The plan is not good, for the foreigners are come here merely to spy out our land. If none of the officers, civil or military, can vanquish this animal, but it is necessary to issue a proclamation for a competent person to engage him, such a proceeding will make us ridiculous to their nation. Your majesty had better transmit your will to all the officers, that if any member of their families, whether one of their children or servants, can overcome the dragon-horse, you will in the first place bestow on him the rank of a Tsin Sze,

and after the victory give him other rewards. In this way there will be certainly found proper persons for the business.

Ching Tĭh approved of this proposal, and accordingly signified his will that the vanquisher of the beast should be promoted to the dignity of a great general, and receive from the Emperor's hands the "water-calling" veil, while he might in the first place appear before his majesty in the arena with the garb of a military graduate of the second rank. No sooner did this decree come down than Le Hung, president of the Board of Revenue, entered to recommend his son Le Tsze Keang as being thoroughly skilled in military arts, and a fit match for the fierce animal. Tseaou Fang also advanced from his rank and stated that he had a valiant follower named Kin Tŏ Gaou, who was strong enough to resist ten thousand men, and could vanquish the horse.

His majesty's countenance showed the delight which he felt at these announcements, and he ordered the two nobles to bring the individuals to the arena next day,

and wait his orders; and this adjusted, the officers retired, and returned home.

Tseaou Fang instantly reported the business to Tŏ Gaou, who prepared his spirits for the conflict. Next day he armed himself and followed Fang to the arena, where they found Le Hung and his son waiting for orders. His majesty then commanded the Board of War to station in the arena two thousand horse guards in order to magnify the spectacle. This done, he summoned the imperial guard to get ready his chariot, mounted it, and proceeded to the spot.

"When fortune frowns, fine gold doth lose its sheen;
But when she smiles, old iron is passing bright."

CHAP. XII.

" The firm and generous heart unmoved by want
Joys in true principle, while meaner souls
Are lured by gain to vice, and marked for woe.
'Tis now Tŏ Gaou's time of glorious wealth,
And from his heart he flings the worthy wife
That in his bosom lay 'mid years of toil."

WHEN the Emperor reached the arena he found the officers of both classes, and the two new generals, Kin and Le, waiting for his orders. After they had offered their homage, he told them all to rise up and stand on one side, on which he ordered the dragon-horse to be brought forward, and the foreign ambassadors to come to his presence. The two men instantly responded to the summons and paid their homage, when his majesty addressed them, saying, " Your sovereign despises the central kingdom as being devoid of men. But stand you on one side, and see the majesty of our celestial court." On this he com-

manded the horse to be let out, and Le Tsze Keang to advance and attack it. The young man had hardly received the order, when he saw the animal as soon as it got out of its iron cage, fierce as a tiger, advance upon him with a roar, aiming at his face. He roused his spirits, however, for the combat, but the strength of the horse was great. Keang could not resist it, and was rolled on the ground by a cuff from one of its fore-feet to the distance of several cubits. The beast then raised its head, and jumped eagerly forward in pursuit of him, anxious to take his life. The man fortunately made a speedy escape, for had he been a moment later his life must have been lost.

The sight of this roused Tŏ Gaou into a great rage. He rushed forward, and putting forth the strength with which he had grasped the oxen, he seized the animal, and held it fast by one of its hind-legs, in spite of all its pushing and tearing. He then threw all his strength into a single blow upon its thigh, and struck it down in an instant. The next moment he drew

out from his back a couple of steel rods, when the beast, by an exertion of its tiger strength, sprang up, and flew at him as before with its claws. The hero, however, raised the rods, and gave it several blows, so that it fell to the earth unable to turn or move. Thinking it was dead, he had partly turned, and was about to report his success to the Emperor, when the creature stirred itself, and made another effort to rise. Gaou at this turned round with his brandished rods, and was about to strike it, but he observed its fore-legs bending down, and its head stooping to the ground, with an appearance of terror and submission. At this sight he said to it in a fierce tone, "If you are submitting to me, you must follow me to the golden presence, and pay homage to the sacred Emperor." The horse instantly followed him, and knelt down along with him. The Emperor's countenance expressed the liveliest joy, and he created the hero on the spot "the beast-subduing general," giving him at the same time a peacock's feather and "the fountain-calling" veil, and telling him to

stand up. The victor accordingly returned thanks for the royal favours, and stood up, but the horse remained motionless by his side.

His majesty now ordered the messengers to come forward, and addressed them in language of strong reproof. "You, barbarians," said he, "are very bold, and despise the celestial court. Right were it that I beheaded you to satisfy my wrath; but the crime is not yours, and therefore I will pardon you to show you my generosity. Return, and tell your barbarous lord to appear in our court every year with tribute. If he create any trouble I will reduce your country to a desert." With these words he ordered his guards to take the men, and give them each forty stripes, and then drive them away to their own country.

When this sentence had been executed, the messengers went with cowering heads, like rats, out of the city, and proceeded on their return with their escort.

In the mean time the Emperor ordered his guards to conduct his carriage back to

the palace. There he gave a great feast to all the officers in the "apartment for nourishing ease," when, after the wine had circulated several times, Tseaou Fang left the table, and addressed his majesty, saying, "Your servant has a daughter named Hing Jung, who is just marriageable, but has not yet been engaged. As I see that the beast-subduing general is young and heroic, I wish to have him for my son-in-law, and pray your majesty to conduct the matter for your humble servant." Being thus appealed to Ching Tĭh instantly called to Tŏ Gaou, and asked whether he was married or not, for that Tseaou Fang wanted to bestow his daughter on him, and he would know the general's own wishes. Gaou revolved the matter in his mind. Fang, thought he, is my benefactor, and his good-will is most conspicuous in his offer to marry his daughter to me. If I do not assent to the proposal he will cherish resentment. He is moreover in important office, and on very good terms with Lew Kin. The Emperor acts too as mediator for him. If I incense him, the

consequences will be bad. My best plan will be to assent in the mean time, planning for wealth and honours in the first place, and afterwards providing for future emergencies. Having formed this resolution he left the feast, and said, "Although I am not married, yet since parties ought to be equally matched I am afraid my meanness will disgrace the guardian's high family." To this Tseaou Fang rejoined, "the general must not be too humble. My mind is made up;" on which words the Emperor ordered Gaou to advance, and pay his respects to the other as his father-in-law, adding that he would himself act in behalf of Fang, cause a residence to be built in the city, and then choose a fortunate day to complete the marriage.

When he had thus spoken he gave "the fountain-calling" veil to Gaou, making a present of the "cloud girdle" to Lew Kin. The rest of the great officers all received the other parts of the tribute, consisting of ornamented silks; but Tseaou Fang's portion was the largest, on account of the skill which he had displayed in bringing for-

ward the victor. After this distribution they all returned thanks, left the palace, and separated.

When Tseaou Fang returned to his residence, he told what he had done to his wife Tang who was exceedingly delighted. Next day Lew Kin sent a card inviting him and Gaou to come and receive his congratulations. The two men accordingly went to the Eunuch's private residence, which they had no sooner reached than he came out to receive them. After the usual ceremonies they entered the hall, when Gaou advanced to offer his homage. Lew Kin, however, laid hold of him with both his hands, and prevented the act, protesting at the same time against his worthy friend's honouring him in that excessive way. The other observed that he was quite ignorant, and that this was his first appearance at the capital. He was indebted for many instructions to him, and the ceremony was therefore a matter of course. He also enquired what lesson he meant to teach him by inviting him that day.

The Eunuch replied that he had been

struck with his youth and heroism, and that his fame had reached the barbarians. He had therefore prepared a slender repast in his honour, that he might congratulate him. While he was thus speaking, the sound of music was heard, and the materials of a feast were brought in, at which the host and his guests took their respective places. They betook themselves with pleasure to the pearly wine, while beautiful maidens stood by in ranks, and waited on them. Gaou observed that he could never forget this kindness, but Kin interrupted him by saying that such coarse rice and poor soups were not fit to be talked about. "Of all the men," said he, "whom I have seen during my lifetime, and I am now upwards of fifty, not one has made any impression on my memory. But since I have met your honour, you have never been out of my mind." Tseaou Fang perceiving Lew Kin's drift, took the opportunity to observe, "Since your excellency has such a love to him, what hinders your adopting him as your son, that he may always attend upon you?" On hearing this, Kin hastily re-

plied that this was indeed his wish, but being afraid that his son-in-law would not accept his advances, he dared not openly express it. The young man then said, "that you should entertain so much love towards me is a fortune descending from a former life. How should I frustrate your wishes?" and instantly rose from the feast, and approached the Eunuch, calling loudly upon him as his step-father to receive his homage. At this Lew Kin clapped his hands, and laughed aloud, crying, "My son, lessen your ceremonies;" and with these words he stretched out his hands and raised Gaou up to sit by himself. This business settled, they fell to the bottle again, and plied it till they got nearly drunk. Soon after Lew Kin ordered a residence to be built and chose a fortunate day to complete the marriage of his son. The Emperor acted as mediator, and the nuptials were celebrated in distinguished style. All the officers, civil and military, came in a body to offer their congratulations, excepting Leang Choo and Le Tung Yang, who kept away under pretence of sickness.

From this time Lew Kin and Tseaou Fang valued Gaou as a precious jewel, and in possession of him felt as if they had acquired wings. They no longer thought their partisans worth looking at, and in consequence these felt indignant and resentful. Gaou also proceeded in the most fearless and imprudent manner to enter the palace, and attend and leave the court, despising the other officers. His history afforded an exemplification of the ancient saying, "Intercourse with the good is like entering a house of the Che Lan flower, whose fragrance you do not perceive after a time; and intercourse with the wicked is like entering a salt fish shop, the stench of which is after a time not felt." Gaou at first gave way to a covetous spirit, and gradually became himself a crafty rogue. It is well said, that a man should stand fast amid the first favours of fortune, for if he once take a wrong step, he will find it difficult to regain his position, and repentance will come too late. In a little time Gaou was seldom to be found in his own house, but continually frequented the private residence of

Lew Kin, consulting with him how they might impose upon the Emperor, deceive the people, and injure the faithful ministers. The Eunuch having got such a stepson was like a fierce tiger with wings. Having the heroic Gaou and the dragon-horse to protect his person, he no longer feared the remarks of others, and increasing his military power daily, he began to feel as if he could no longer be a subject. Under the influence of this feeling he privately procured quantities of armour, royal robes, swords, spears, and precious things, and deposited them in an inner treasury. He also collected a number of young men and idle fellows, who were taught archery and horsemanship by Gaou, in a garden behind, against the events of a future day. As men in the time of pleasure forget the hardships of poverty, and in the hour of glory the difficulties of former days, such was the case of Gaou. Time passed like an arrow; the sun and moon revolved like shuttles; summer went and winter came: a whole year expired without his thinking of his wife. She, however, from the day

he departed kept worshipping the gods and bowing to Fŭh, praying that her husband might soon become famous, and that his body might be preserved in health. In the day-time she spun her thread and during the night prepared the flax; and in this way she passed through the spring and autumn, her eyes nearly worn out with expectation, and yet no news from her husband. At last some one told her that her husband had gained office, on which she began to think, how, considering the love which had always been between them, he had sent no one to come and conduct her to him. This awoke very strong suspicions, but then again she reflected that the delay might be owing to the multifarious business of his office, which left him no leisure. She remained therefore in fruitless expectation several months longer. Another winter, indeed, came, and still the fish remained sunk, and the goose seemed to be dead.* To add to her dis-

* No news were brought to him, alluding to a former custom, when fish and wild geese were used to carry letters.

tress she had no brother or sister-in-law to depend upon, and her solitary pain becoming intolerable, she determined to imitate the example set by Woo Neang of old, and seek her husband in another place. Having settled this resolution, one day she locked fast her door, and taking some necessaries along with her, went to the hill where the tomb of her husband's parents was, offered worship to them, and then bent her steps to the capital.

Surmounting the hills with boldness, and resting at the inns, she proceeded on her way. Being unaccustomed to the road, however, she met with some delays, and being obliged to pawn all her good garments she became like a beggar. Still the capital was not distant, and she reached it in a short time, when she heard the people talking about the General Gaou, how young and heroic he was, and how he had subdued the dragon-horse, and had become a great favourite with the Emperor. Wang rejoiced at this news, so far beyond her expectations, and she inquired where his house was. "You see," said several people

to her, "the house with the four new high walls. Outside the gate is a yellow flag, with the words, "Beast-subduing general," written in large characters upon it, and on each side are two stone lions: that is it." Wang on this went towards the gate, and surveying the house as she drew near, she said that it was indeed commanding and beautiful. Full of joy in her heart she went up to it, and seeing an old man sitting in the door, she asked him whether that was the house of the General Kin Tŏ Gaou. The porter answered that it was, and inquired her business. She replied that she would thank him to let the general know that Mrs. Wang of Gae Hea Hill in Fung Jun hèèn was there. On receiving this message the man looked at her, and seeing that her looks were good, though her clothes were dirty, he could not tell what sort of person she was, but told her to wait there a little while he went in. With these words he turned and entered, leaving Wang waiting without.

"His love by his new spouse was stolen away,
And for the old one nought but tears remained."

CHAP. XIII.

"As clouds by lawless winds are tossed
No man as free from pain dare boast.
Husband and wife by ties are bound,
The closest that on earth are found!
Yet brittle oft, one moment's fate
Changing their love to sternest hate."

THE porter, as we have related, went in with Wang's message to announce it to his master. When he got to the middle hall, he found him there, and immediately knelt down and told him that a woman of the name of Wang, in ragged clothes, who said she was from Gae Hea Hill, in Fung Jun hèèn, wanted to see him. He then asked what answer he should return; but Gaou was so terrified at the news, that his soul departed to the nine regions of the clouds, leaving his body without its lord. He managed, however, to order the porter to go out, and tell the woman to wait; and when the man was gone he began

to think what he should do. He was very sorrowful and anxious, reasoning in his heart that if he received her into the house, the young lady, his new wife, would ill brook such a thing; and then, if he did not call her in, Wang would probably get into a passion outside, and make him lose his character. He had got into a position where it was difficult either to recede or advance, and was in the greatest consternation.

It happened fortunately for him, however, that Lew Kin, some time before, fearing that Gaou might not understand all things at his first entrance on a courtier's life, had appointed one of his retainers, named Kea Sèèn, an individual of great knowledge and a scheming mind, to be ordinary-in-waiting to him, and at the same time charged him to consult this man whenever he felt any doubt or difficulty. From the time that Kea Sèèn came to his house, Gaou consequently deliberated with him on every subject; and thus Sèèn happened to be with him when the porter brought the foregoing message. When he

saw that it so much discomposed the general, he knew there must be something strange in it, and coming up to him he inquired the cause of his sorrow. Gaou lifted up his eyes, and seeing that it was only Sèèn, and that there was nobody near, he said, "There is a matter here about which I want to consult you, but if you let it drop out, the evil consequences will not be small." At these words Sèèn observed, "Since I have received the promotion of his excellency Lew Kin, and since you have condescended to favour me with your love, though the matter should prove as great as heaven, I should not dare to disclose it. But if you do not believe me, wait until I have pronounced an oath."

He instantly descended the hall steps, and said in the face of heaven, "General Kin has a matter about which he wishes to consult me, Kea Sèèn. If I disclose the smallest minutiæ of it, may I die beneath ten thousand knives!"

When the oath was ended, he turned and said to Gaou, "Though you were to

summon me to walk right into the wide ocean or through flaming fire, I should not decline your order."

The other seeing him thus faithful and righteous, then told him that Mrs. Wang, whom the porter had just announced, was his true married wife. "Formerly," said he, "when my benefactor, Cheaou, stated before the Emperor his desire to marry his daughter to me, and moreover requested his majesty to act as middle man, I felt it difficult to refuse him, and having no leisure to reflect, I gave my consent. Now that I have heard of Wang's arrival, I wish to receive her into the house, but am afraid that, should my new wife know the truth, she will not endure such a discovery. Moreover, that day, in the presence of the Emperor, I said that I was not married, so that should Fang's daughter tell her father, the matter would look very ugly. On the other hand, if I do not receive Wang, I am afraid she will force her way into the house. You see that in my position it is difficult either to advance or to

recede. Can you devise any good scheme to extricate me?"

"For you to meet Wang," replied Kea Sèèn, "and receive her into the house, is a small matter; but should your father-in-law discover the truth and report it to the Emperor, you will be held guilty of deceiving his majesty, and get involved in trouble. In my humble opinion, your best plan will be to pretend that this is your sister-in-law, come to ask about you; and without letting any one know it, receive her into a retired apartment. You can there arrange a feast, and talk with her about the feelings natural to your separation, and urge her kindly to drink till she becomes intoxicated. After that you can conduct her to a private room, and at the third watch, have her put to death. Your new wife can be told that it was your sister-in-law, but that you had given her money and sent her away. By this plan all contingencies are guarded against: what think you of it?"

Gaou exclaimed with admiration, "A beautiful scheme indeed!" and instantly

told his ordinary to go out and receive the woman, and to manage every thing according to his plan, assuring him that when the business was accomplished he should have a very handsome reward. Sèèn accordingly went out to the door, and seeing Wang, said, "The general requests you to come to a retired apartment to meet him. Follow me in." At these words Wang moved her pretty feet and went after him to an apartment, where he requested her to sit down for a little, while he called the general.

In a short time Gaou appeared, his countenance all radiant with smiles, and advanced to salute her in a respectful manner. His wife left her seat and advanced to meet him, saying, "I am happy on account of the high office and distinguished rank which you have gained, and ready to leap for joy; but how was it that you did not send me the slightest intelligence, but gave me all the trouble of finding my way here?" Gaou began to excuse himself under false pretences, saying, that it was not his wish to make his worthy wife anxious, and that

he had wished several times to return home, but that in consequence of his numerous engagements at court he had not found leisure. In this way he had often been disappointed in his wishes, but yesterday he had resolved to send a man for her. "Now, however," said he, "you are well come, and I am spared the trouble."

With these words he ordered Sèèn to provide a suit of clean clothes for his wife, and a feast to be prepared to celebrate their joyful meeting. In a short time this order was obeyed, and they both commenced paying court to the wine. The lady, led on by the kind speeches of her husband, ignorant of his design, and excited by the view of his glory and comfort, drank, without perceiving it, till she became intoxicated and began to vomit. When she was in this state, Gaou bade Sèèn conduct her to a private room to sleep, and that he must manage the business he was about with care, for she had some acquaintance with military arts, which would demand in him the greatest caution. All these orders Kea received, treasuring them in his me-

mory, and Gaou immediately afterwards retired inwards, and went up to the higher apartments.

The same day that Wang arrived at her husband's, and while the porter was gone in to announce her message, a maid-servant, named Sèàou Lèèn, who had been out on some business, happened to return home. Seeing a woman at the door, whose dress showed that she did not belong to the capital, Lèèn inquired where she had come from, and whom she wanted. Wang in reply, having related all the particulars of her history, the other exclaimed, "You are then my mistress; wait till I go in and inform my master. I will instantly come out again to receive you." With these words she entered; but when she came to the middle hall, and saw the general and his ordinary in close and secret conference, she stopped and slipped behind the door-screen, listening to their discourse. In this way she discovered the general's wickedness, and that he was plotting to injure his true married wife. The girl's hair stood on end at what she heard, and the

perspiration flowed from her whole body. She wished to go in at once and disclose the thing to her young mistress, but then she did not know how that lady might look upon it. Next she thought to put it out of her mind; but then her conscience would not let her rest, for how could she allow the woman to be murdered without attempting to save her? She moreover really pitied Wang, who seemed destined to such a wrongful death. In consequence of these thoughts, she could get no rest, sitting or walking, but was extremely distressed. She walked about listening to every noise, and discovered that the victim had been made drunk and conveyed to a private apartment to sleep. She cast about in her mind for a time, seeking some plan, but the only one which occurred to her was to let the woman run off, and save her life by flight. But again she began to fear that the general might discover the truth, and then it would be difficult to preserve her own life. She determined, therefore, to fly with the other, and in order to provide for the expences of the journey, to take advantage of the

bright moon, and at deep night, when all were asleep, to slip into the inner apartments and steal some small but valuable articles. Having effected this she thought that by treading carefully, so as not to alarm the dogs, they might be able to escape.

This plan settled in her mind, Lèèn raised her eyes and looked round on every side. The moon was shining calmly in the heavens, and the sounds of men were hushed in silence: all within the house were fast asleep,—some snoring, and some speaking in their dreams. In the midst of this stillness she entered the inner apartments, took the necessary articles, and having concealed them about her person, ran back to the private room where they had deposited Wang. By this time it was the second watch, and when she had pushed open the door and entered, she found the lamps flickering half-extinguished on the table. Having drawn out the wick she approached the sleeper, but saw from her countenance that she was still quite intoxicated. She called her, however, with a

gentle voice, to rise up and hear what she had to say; but Wang merely gave a drunken stare, and seeing that it was only a maid-servant, supposed she could have nothing to talk about, turned on her side, and went to sleep again. Lèèn felt very anxious, and was afraid the evil might overtake them; she therefore pushed the other with her hand, saying, in an excited tone, "Mistress, get up! Evil impends over you! Delay, and your life is lost! Can you still covet sleep?"

Wang was still in the land of drunkenness, but she no sooner heard these words than she leaped up. The maiden then told her of the general's injustice; how he had married another wife, and was now plotting to kill her. "Get up quickly," said she, "and I will run with you." The wrath of Wang was kindled at this statement, and fury sprang up in her gall. She wept, and reviled Tŏ Gaou for his ingratitude and wickedness, and declared that, in order to satisfy her resentment, she would go and find the villain, and either kill him or be killed. Lèèn, how-

ever, stopped her, and pointed out that such a proceeding would be useless. "He has here," observed she, "multitudes of men and horses, and, notwithstanding your courage and strength, it is difficult for a single palm to emit a sound, or for few to resist many. Let us quickly fly out of this trap, and prevent his injuring us."

Her words were not finished when Kea Sèèn arrived. No sooner did the villain see Wang and Sèàou Lèèn talking together, than he knew that his plot was discovered, and would have run back if the former had not caught sight of him. Having no alternative but to advance, he concealed the knife which he carried behind him, and approached, saying, that the general had sent him to see whether she would like some tea. "I am much indebted to the general's kindness," replied Wang with a cold smile, which revealed to Sèèn his peril. He turned, and was running off, when the woman came forward and first held him fast, and then knocked him down. Seeing a small

knife protruding behind him, she drew it out. "You are very bold," cried she, "in wishing to injure me, but I will first take out your liver and heart, and see how black they are."

Sêên endeavoured to move her to spare him by throwing all the fault on Tŏ Gaou, but Wang, without allowing him to finish his statement, gave him several cuts in the face, and then, thrusting the knife into his breast, tore out his liver and bowels, and threw them on the ground, turning, when she had finished, to Lêên, and telling her to lead the way. They accordingly entered the garden behind, and secretly opening a door in one of the side walls, passed out and fled.

> "Who others injures hurts himself, and finds
> A just award. Heaven's net is close, nor lets
> The smallest point drop through."

The affair of the murder lay heavily on Gaou's mind, so that he could not rest, but passed a sleepless night, tossing about upon his bed. As soon as he heard the third watch sound, he arose, and stepped forth

into the hall, ordering some one to call Kea Lèèn. The attendants accordingly called several times with a loud voice for that individual, but met with no reply. When they announced this to Tŏ Gaou, and that they did not know where he had gone, he felt exceedingly distressed, and went instantly to the private apartment himself, to see what had transpired. Seeing the door wide open, and a man lying on his face upon the ground, he took the lamp in his hand, and, looking carefully, recognised Kea Sèèn weltering in his blood, and his bowels torn out. It instantly appeared to him that his ordinary had been slain, and he trembled with terror. Searching also in every direction, and not finding Wang, he saw that she had become acquainted with their plot, but could not tell by whose means. Full of indignation he returned to the hall, and sat down there waiting for morning.

As soon as day dawned, he summoned all the children and domestics of his family, and all the members of his office to his presence, in order that he might call over their names. All collected in the hall in

about ten minutes, when he called their names one by one, and found all present excepting the maiden Sèàou Lèèn. At this discovery he burst instantly into a great rage, and cried with a rough voice, "The case is plain. This girl joined my sister-in-law, and stole my money. Being discovered by Kea Sèèn, and pursued, they killed Sèèn, and then, fearing the consequences, fled away through the side door in the garden behind."

With these words he ordered four of his domestics distinguished for their fierceness and courage, to take eight of the retainers in his office with them, and follow the track of the fugitives. He promised them very large rewards if they brought him the heads of the pair, and threatened them with certain death if they connived at their escape; and the men having received his orders, armed themselves and proceeded boldly forward.

We must return now to the rescued victim and her friend. Aided by the brightness of the moon, Wang was able to recognise the road by which she had come

to the capital, along which they accordingly took their course. Fearing that as soon as day broke, a pursuit would be instituted after them, they ran for upwards of ten le without any regard to the unevenness of the way. By this time the morning began to dawn, when Sêàou Lêên observed to her companion, that as they were fleeing from danger and had no friends or acquaintances, she did not know where they should go for refuge. Wang replied, that she had an adopted mother living in Yung Jem hêên, right before them. Her husband indeed was dead, but she had one son called Ho Ching Pang, who was married to a lady of the name of Leu. Both he and his wife, she said, were of extraordinary courage, and got their living by hunting. If they could only reach their house they would be sure of protection and shelter; but, at the same time, as they were not possessed of the least money, it would be embarrassing and difficult for them to be solely dependent on others. From this anxiety Sêàou Lêên relieved her mind by telling her of the measure she

had adopted after forming the resolution to rescue her from death.

Wang praised her forethought in the highest terms, saying, that a sister was seldom found possessed of so much stedfast righteousness united to so much ingenuity and cleverness.

"My meeting with you," said she, "in these circumstances is sufficient happiness for three lives. Never can I meet with such another, and I wish to form a friendship that may bind us together as daughters of the same mother, to enable me to keep in mind your great kindness. When I come to the bubbling fountain I shall recompense it. You must wait till then."

"Though my station is mean," replied Lèèn, "I am not ignorant of the proper observances. How should I dare to presume to make myself of the same rank with you, and forget the distinction of mistress and servant?"

"If you reason about it," said the other, "you are my benefactor, and ought to rank above me. But in this time of calamity and distress, let us wave such mat-

ters and yield to circumstances. You must not be obstinate, for if we are discovered by any body, the consequences will be very bad."

Sêàou Lêèn hearing her talk in this way yielded to her wishes, and then they both hurried along. The sun by imperceptible advances was now descending to the west, and they threw themselves into an inn. In consequence however of their anxiety they tossed about on their beds unable to sleep.

> "The troubled soul flies from the couch of rest,
> And hates the cock's unwelcome morning cry."

In this way they passed the night, and so soon as it was dawn, only waiting to dress their hair and perform their ablutions, betook themselves to the way again.

In the meantime their pursuers, after searching for them the whole day in vain, rested for the night in an inn, where the landlord could give them no information. As soon as it was day, they renewed the pursuit, and coming to another inn three or four le farther on, they asked whether he had seen two women passing by the

night before. The man told them that they had slept in his house, and had only left it early in the morning. On hearing this they all urged their horses with the whip, so that the two fugitives soon heard the noise of their pursuers quite close at hand. Lèèn's face became like earth with fear, which Wang perceiving, she told her in a low tone not to be terrified, for that she would protect her. She bade her at the same time run forward, taking care to keep the straight path so that she might easily find her. On this the maiden flew on, and Wang hastily followed her, but by this time their pursuers came in sight of them. Inspired by their success, these came on in furious haste, crying out fiercely, "Stop cravens, stop! Though you run to the ends of the earth or the corners of the sea, we will catch you and take you back to the general that he may punish your crimes, and not involve us in trouble."

"The fish escaping from the net
Leaps eagerly away;
The bird that fears the archer's bow
Flies wildly from the spray."

CHAP. XIV.

"Ingratitude is a most crying sin;
Why leave our old friends, and look out for new?
Let Tŏ Gaou's name serve as a beacon light,
Descending with disgrace in history's page."

THE servants of Tŏ Gaou urged their horses and plied the whip in furious pursuit. As they came up, Wang looked round, and seeing them close upon her, halted, and waited their approach. The four men came on with their spears uplifted, trying to pierce her, but she stepped aside, and catching the weapons with her hand, tried to pull them from their owners with all her might. They, despising her as a weak woman, and unprepared for such an attack, were rolled from their saddles on the ground, when Wang seized a spear and used it like

"A parched dragon rolling in the waves,
Tossing the glittering spear. Its burnish'd point
Gleams like the snow-white blossoms of the plum."

The four were soon all beaten to a jelly, and then thrown on the right and on the left; but by this time the eight attendants of the office had come up to their assistance. Wang, seeing they were so many, and fearing that Lèèn might have run so far as to make it difficult to find her, maintained the combat in a desultory manner, now running, now fighting.

At this juncture another individual appeared upon the scene. Chow Yung had remained up to the present period without any letter from his friend since the time of his departure. Being ignorant of his fortunes,—whether he had gained a high and distinguished office or not,—he could not account for the forgetfulness of his brotherhood, which left him so long to the sport of his own imaginations, and therefore kept constantly by the highway side or on the borders of the mountains, partly that he might cut wood for his subsistence, and partly that he might be in the way of news from Tŏ Gaou.

The same day that the pursuers came up with Wang and her friend, Yung, as he

was cutting wood at the foot of Wan Fung Hill, saw a young woman in the palace dress running in great haste along the way, and crying out for help. This spectacle brought him down from the hill in haste. He stopped the fugitive, and asked the cause of her flight, but instead of giving him a direct reply, Sêàou Lêèn—for it was she—said, "If your heroism can save our lives, you may detain me, but if not, let me go."

"Let me know," replied he, "the particulars of your alarm; and though the matter be as great as heaven, I have courage to remove it."

Lêèn then told him with tears her name, and gave him an outline of the preceding events, concluding by an expression of her thankfulness at meeting with him, and begging him to deliver them. Chow Yung was rendered exceedingly indignant by the statement, and exclaimed, "If in his day of glory he thus treats his true married wife, I need not be surprised at his making light of our alliance; I never thought he would have shown himself so

mean a man. I will now save his wife, and protect her till he comes here; and if, after my advising him to receive her into his house, he persists in the same improper conduct, I will break off all intercourse with him entirely."

He had not finished these words when Wang and her pursuers arrived. He then plucked a small tree from the hill side, and having lopped off its branches, raised it in his hand, and advanced forward to stop the men. "I am here," cried he, in a fierce tone, "who dares display his violence?" They, however, replied with one voice, that the two fugitives had been guilty of great crimes against General Kin, and that they were come to take them. "Who are you," asked they, "that dare to exert yourself on their behalf. Declare your dog's name."

"If you want to save your lives," replied Yung with a loud laugh, "you had better confess your crime quickly to this lady. On this condition I will spare you, and you can go home to your master, and tell him that one Chow Yung, of Keang

Nan, has rescued the objects of your pursuit, and if he wants to take them he can come himself to my house, when perhaps I will allow him to carry them with him. If you are not willing to do this, I Chow Yung am here; who dares to stir?"

This speech only made the men angry. They advanced to fight, but were no match for the hero, who soon compelled them to flee, all being severely and most painfully wounded.

Wang and her friend then advanced to thank their deliverer, but he bowed, and begged that his sister-in-law would excuse him for having been so late in his arrival, and thereby exposed her to such alarm. Struck by his language, Wang inquired whether he were not Chow Yung, that had contracted a brotherhood with her husband at the foot of Yae Hea Hill? Yung nodded, and said he was; on which she related minutely to him the preceding events. When she had finished the recital, he invited her to his house, in consequence of the conduct of his brother, that they might there consult about other measures.

This proposal the other declined, saying that they would be in difficulties if Gaou should bring soldiers upon them. Yung, however, asked what room there could be for fear when he was there, and on this they yielded, and went with him.

The servants of Gaou, having been overthrown by Chow Yung, returned home, and acquainted their master with what had occurred. He contracted his eyebrows with vexation at their narration, and observed that such an issue of events was indeed enough to make a man angry. The men, however, were indignant at the defeat which they had sustained, and, dissatisfied at the easy manner in which Gaou took the matter, they endeavoured to arouse him by inquiring who Chow Yung was, that he himself was so afraid of him. Gaou replied that he was not afraid of the man, but having contracted a brotherhood with him, and sworn in the face of Heaven that, though born at different times, they wished to die on the same day, it was difficult to quarrel with him. On this the others observed, that though *he* might

cherish those brotherly feelings, Yung entertained no regard for him. "He was anxious, moreover," said they, "to come and kill you, and would have done so, had he not have been stopped by the women. Afterwards, when he had succeeded in defeating us, and causing us to retire, he cried to us with a loud voice, saying, 'Return, and tell the dog, Tŏ Gaou, that having no eyeballs in my eyes, I mistook his character; but now I carry these two women with me, and, if he has any ability, he can come and try his strength with mine. I shall wait for him in my house, and if he will not come, he has not the mind of a man.'"

Before he heard these words Gaou was quite unconcerned, but no sooner had the men finished, than he struck the table in a rage, and in a loud tone declared that Yung was a wild man of the woods, recompensing kindness with enmity, and adding contempt to his injury. He instantly gave orders for three hundred horsemen to be in waiting, and retired to put on his armour. This done, he came out again

into the hall, and finding the men all prepared, he ordered the defeated party to lead the way, and proceeded directly to Tung Inn hèèn.

Having gone with Yung, Wang and Seaou Lèèn passed the night in his house, while he himself kept watch at the door, fearing that Gaou might send soldiers to attack them during the darkness. Next day his sister-in-law, reflecting that suspicions might be excited by their dwelling with him, observed to him that they were exceedingly thankful for his righteous assistance, and ought indeed to remain with him, but as her husband, on hearing of what had occurred would certainly come with soldiers, and thereby involve him in trouble, she thought it better to go to her adopted mother's. She then told him where her mother dwelt, and also her name and surname, expressing a hope that when he had leisure he would come and see them.

Yung likewise thought that people might talk about it, since the women were both young, and therefore said nothing to con-

strain her to stay; merely observing, that when she got to her friends she should not let the previous events prey upon her mind, but pass her time pleasantly with her companion, for when he saw his brother he would tell him plainly of her feelings, and perhaps Gaou might alter his affections and return to her.

On this they bade each other farewell, and were just going out at the door, when they heard the report of a gun from the mountain in their front, and saw in the same direction a cloud of dust. In a little there appeared a troop of horsemen advancing at a flying pace, with a general at their head bearing a resemblance to Tŏ Gaou. Yung requested the two women to return without fear to the house, for he himself knew what to do. They returned accordingly, and by this time Gaou had come up and recognized his friend.

"Mean fellow!" cried he, in a fierce tone, "how is it that instead of returning my kindness, you treat me as an enemy? My sister-in-law leagued with a poor maid-servant, and stole a large quantity of gold

and silver from my house. They then made their escape, and when I sent servants in pursuit of them, you interfered for their rescue, and took them to your house. You have moreover called me to come here, and try my strength with you; I am here; if you have the ability, come forward."

With these words he lifted up his silver spear, and aimed a blow, which Yung avoided, catching hold of the spear at the same time, and saying, "My brother, when I remembered the alliance which we formed that day, how could I sit still, and see my sister outraged by your servants without saving her? Wang is a worthy virtuous woman, and your true married wife, who has shared with you the sweet and the bitter. You should remember the affection and uprightness with which she dwelt with you in your poverty, and listen to my advice to change your conduct and return to her. It will indeed prove much the best plan to take my sister back with you."

Enraged at his words, Gaou exclaimed, "Your only motive in receiving the two individuals into your house is to take an

improper and selfish advantage of their youth. With what face can you stand before any man?"

Fire burned in Yung's heart at these words. Bursting into a furious passion, he exclaimed, "I mistook you for a man of worth, and therefore formerly contracted an alliance with you. Who could have conceived that you would perpetrate such actions, and utter such words as you have done this day. With the face of a man, you have the heart of a beast. My sister-in-law, Wang, is your true married wife, and lived in comfort with you several years. When she saw that glory had fallen to your lot, she simply concluded that the wife should, as before, cleave to her husband; but you had already yielded to your wicked heart, and married another. I shall let that pass, however. But when she arrived at the capital in quest of you, you ought to have accommodated your conduct to your circumstances, and to have let the new and the old dwell together, — thus doing your duty to both parties; and if such a proceeding was quite impossible,

you might have given Wang some money, and requested her to return home. She is a worthy and virtuous woman, and would certainly have complied with your wishes; and afterwards, under pretext of visiting your parents' tombs, you might have contrived to come and spend some days every year with her; and had you acted in this way, she would not have been indignant at you. How could you so ungratefully and unjustly deceive people, by pretending that she was your sister-in-law, and, under the mask of kindness, make her drunk, and then employ a man to kill her? When your design was frustrated, and the righteous maid-servant delivered her, you ought to have seen your crime, instead of sending persons in pursuit to slay her.

"When I came to her rescue, and saved her, I thought of your former kindness and righteousness, and did not kill your servants, but told them to return and ask you to come here yourself. My object in so doing was to tell you plainly about your conduct in this affair of your wife, in hopes that you would change your feelings, and take her to your house. I did not think

that you would refuse to distinguish black from white, bring soldiers with you, and talk in such an outrageous, offensive, and insulting manner. Lay your hand upon your conscience, and think well over the whole matter before you throw away my brotherly affection."

Such was the wrath of Gaou at this remonstrance that it raised his cap from his head. "My affairs are my own," said he. "What have you to do with them, or talk in such a lengthy way about them? Quickly bring out these two people, that I may take them back to the capital, and condemn them; for if you do not, I will certainly take your dog's life without mercy."

Fire raged in Yung's lungs and gall at this reply. "The two women," cried he, with a loud voice, "are now in my house. If you are able, come and take them." Then, raising his voice yet farther, he called on his sister and her friend to come out, and see if he would dare to lay hands on them, and carry them back.

"The hero's spirit roused to sudden wrath,
Throws to the dust his former kind regards."

CHAP. XV.

"Two men you'll find attached by closest bonds,
Yet afterwards each seeking his own ends.
Chow Yung and Kin Tŏ Gaou a friendship swore,
And cherish'd suddenly the direst hate."

On hearing Yung's summons, Wang came forth with Seaou Lèèn. She told her friend to run off before her, and then advanced forward to the combatants. Pointing to Tŏ Gaou, she began to reproach him. "Cold-hearted villain," said she, "how dare you look me again in the face?"

Her husband, however, made no reply; but instantly aimed a blow at her with his spear, while Yung hastily laid hold of the weapon, exclaiming, "Kin Tŏ Gaou, Kin Tŏ Gaou, since you exhibit such a want of affection, don't be angry at me, as if I were doing you wrong?" And with these words he grasped the handle of the spear, and bent it with all his might, till it broke

with a crash in two. The other instantly leaped from his horse, and fought with him on foot. After more than ten rounds the advantage inclined to neither side, when Gaou's attendants advanced to his help. To these Wang opposed herself, but unable singly to resist such a number, she was forced to run, leaving Yung entirely surrounded. The hero, however, by a strenuous exertion, opened a path for himself, and fled after her, hotly pursued by Gaou, who urged on his men, determined not to abandon the combat till all three should have been secured.

The flight of both parties was soon interrupted. Ho Chin Pang, attracted by the beauty and warmth of the day, and being at leisure, had come out with his wife Lew to hunt, both of them carrying their weapons along with them. As they were proceeding along the road, they saw a cloud of dust before them, and heard a loud noise, as of people engaged in battle. They instantly ascended a rising ground, to see what was the matter, and perceived a young woman running very hurriedly in

the direction where they were. Before she could get up to them she was brought to a stand, by the road branching into three different ways. While she was looking round her most anxiously, there came up another, who called out to her, "A bow-shot farther is the house of Ho Chin Pang, my brother; make haste to get there, and we are safe."

Hearing his own name, Pang looked at the person attentively, and recognized his adopted sister Wang. He instantly ran down from the height with his wife, very much to the consternation of the two fugitives, whose colour left them. Coming up to them, and addressing Wang as his sister, he asked how she had come there in such a fright, on which she related to him minutely the various circumstances that had occurred.

The recital kindled the rage of Pang and his wife. They inquired whether the noise which they heard in front was not that of the pursuers, and were told that it was, and that her brother-in-law was opposing them; but she knew not

with what success. Wang then earnestly entreated him to go to Yung's help; with which request he instantly complied, telling her and her friend to go to his house, and wait while he and his wife advanced to the attack. "We shall drive them before us," said he, "like falling flowers or flowing water."

The two friends, on this, betook themselves again to flight, and Pang and his wife hastened forward with their weapons. As soon as they met Chow Yung running from his foes, they raised, the one her knife and the other his spear, and, as fierce as wolves or tigers, stopped the pursuit. Yung, encouraged by their assistance, turned and renewed the battle. Each of the three had the courage of ten thousand men; the soldiers of Gaou could in nowise withstand them, being, moreover, wearied with marching for two days and a night, and with the combat they had already maintained with Yung. A great slaughter was made of them by their two new adversaries; for they could find no way of escape. Of the three hundred, one-third

had already been despatched. And now, such was the havoc made by Pang and his wife, that the carcasses covered the plain, and the ground was stained with blood. Of the whole number only a score or two were left, and these all had broken heads and mangled legs.

Gaou himself was severely hurt, and obliged to turn his horse's head and flee. Yung cried out to him, that he let him go solely because of the uprightness which he had formerly displayed. The two others, however, were anxious to pursue him, but he also stopped them, saying they had better deal gently with him, and thus prevent people from making observations.

The conflict being over, the two heroes inquired each other's name and history; and, while they were talking on these subjects, a fire suddenly burst forth behind the Yae Hea Hills, the flames towering to the sky. Yung stamped his feet at the spectacle, crying in alarm, "That wolfish thief, Tŏ Gaou, is burning his own house, and my poor cottage also is all consumed!" Bursting at the same time into a great

rage, he was rushing forward, determined either to kill or to be killed, but his friend held him back.

"Don't be grieved," said Pang. "Tho' my cottage is mean and narrow, you can rest in it for a time. You had better go with me to your sister, and afterwards you can deliberate about what is to be done." Affected by the generous and disinterested spirit which these words evinced, Yung went with him, and arriving at his house found that Wang and Seaou Lèèn had already reached it. Great was the joy of all at their re-union.

Yung having first advanced to Pang's mother, and paid her his respects, they all sat down together. The discourse was commenced by Wang's inquiry if the villain had been killed.

"We spared his life," answered her brother, "but forced him to flee."

"But why," said she again, "did you not kill so cold-hearted a fellow to prevent future trouble?"

"I don't suppose," rejoined Yung, "he can do any thing to us; but he has burned

down both your house and mine. What are we to do?"

Wang was roused again by this information. Bursting into a torrent of reproach against her husband, she exclaimed, "Truly you have the face of a man with the heart of a wolf! Heaven surely cannot bear with you!" Then, addressing the others, she repeated her brother's question.

Here Chin Pang observed, "If you two ladies and your friend do not despise the smallness and narrowness of my cottage, you can remain and share with me the sweet and the bitter, without the trouble of forming other plans."

"Since the old lady," said Lèèn, "and her family are so kind, let us remain all together for a time, and afterwards quietly discuss our movements. I have here some jewels of gold and silver, which Yung can exchange for money, and therewith build a house. Whatever is not needed for that, he and Pang can employ in business in order to procure our livelihood."

These remarks exceedingly delighted the whole company. Yung immediately

addressed Pang, saying that he wished to contract a brotherhood with him, and would be glad if he would accede to his views. To this the other replied with a smile, that if they formed such a connection, they must on no account follow the example of Tŏ Gaou; and the other imprecated the vengeance of the Gods upon either of them who should act in such a way. Having thus spoken, they worshipped together in the face of Heaven, and from that time they became much attached to each other, displaying as much affection as if they had been children of the same mother.

While they continued here, Wang consulted with Pang's mother and wife, and they agreed together to marry Seaou Lèèn to Chow Yung. Having settled the matter, they only waited for a fortunate day to unite the pair. The greatest unanimity and affection pervaded the whole family.

> "Heroes with heroines match in nature's rule,
> And roguish men must roguish partners find."

CHAP. XVI.

"The hero fearless urges on his way,
High heaven his guardian, lest he go astray.
Its sacred rules no devious course allow.
Should for a time deceit around him throw
Its wicked spells, reflection leads him right.
His acts again with heavenly truth are bright."

We shall leave the two heroes, Chow Yung and Chin Pang, amid the happiness of their newly-formed alliance, and return to trace the fortunes of the rebels in Shan Se. After they had got possession of the two hèèn of Tsze Yang and Pĭh Ho, their chief Wang Che Fan made several attacks both on Hing Gan foo and Yèèn Gan foo, but without success. He therefore assembled all his officers in the second month of the seventh year of Ching Tĭh, and selected one hundred thousand of the boldest troops to attack the latter city.

Yang Yĭh Ts'ing being informed of this, increased the number of the garrison, and forwarded a fresh memorial to the capital.

He had been disappointed at receiving no answer to the former one, and had despatched some of his people to ascertain the reason. These brought him word, that a party of villains were aiming at the sole authority, on which he would have returned at once to exterminate them, had it not been that the movements of Che Fan made it difficult for him to leave Shan Se. On the present occasion, therefore, as the daring of the rebels rendered it necessary for him to write another despatch, he ordered his messenger to go with it directly to Leang Choo.

As soon as the guardian received it, he proceeded to the palace, and communicated the intelligence to the Emperor. His majesty instantly proposed to him, that the Beast-subduing General should be appointed commander-in-chief, and proceed to the seat of war.

"Not so," observed Leang Choo; "Tŏ Gaou is an uncultivated rustic, and as he but lately appeared at court, he cannot be able to direct the movements of an army, and would, I fear, mismanage such a great

affair, which concerns the interests of the empire."

"Whom then do you propose?" "In my humble opinion, Le Tung Yang is the person for this duty; for he is prudent, and his abilities render him alike conspicuous in peace and war. Le Tsze Keang, son of the president of the board of revenue, being the child of a meritorious father, and endowed himself with great military talents, may command the van, and the director of the board of war, Sun Kéén Chang, possessing extensive knowledge and skill, may have charge of the commissariat department. If your majesty will send these men with one hundred thousand valiant soldiers to unite with Yang Yĭh Ts'ing, the thievish vermin will surely be extirpated."

The Emperor was delighted with these nominations, and commanded Leang Choo to write off a decree, making the appointments, and intimating the necessity of preparing immediately for the journey, without entering the palace to have an interview with himself. He sent also the

seal of office to Le Tung Yang along with the decree, of which the guardian himself was the bearer. Tung Yang knelt down, and performed the ceremonies of audience, while the decree was read, and then rose up, and sat down with his friend.

The guardian related to him the Emperor's proposal to intrust the command to Tŏ Gaou. "I interposed," said he, "and prevented such a measure, by proposing yourself. When you reach Shan Se, you must acquaint Yang Yĭh Ts'ing with the villanous proceedings in the palace, and request him to return with his victorious troops, and extirpate the crafty crew. I shall attend to the business of the court while you are absent, so that you need not be anxious; but instantly forward orders to your two associates to commence their march."

With these words, Leang Choo took his leave of the general, and returned to the palace, to announce that he had transmitted the decree; and in the mean time Yang sent orders to his two associates to get ready one hundred thousand able-bodied

soldiers. This being done, he sacrificed to the flag, set the troops in motion, and all in martial array commenced a most imposing march to Shan Se.

While the army was on its route the following circumstances led our two friends, Yung and Pang, to join it. From the day on which they formed their alliance, they had proved inseparable companions, either hunting on the hills, or practising archery and horsemanship at home. The route of the troops was not far from their dwelling; and the day on which they passed by, Yung and his brother, being at leisure, took their bows and arrows, and went out to hunt. In the course of their rambling they came to a lofty hill covered with trees and bushes, and as they were looking about to find a path, there rushed out a Heae Chae. The hunters instantly attacked it with their hammers, and the animal, unable to withstand them, ran off right down the hill, eagerly pursued. On reaching the bottom, the Heae Chae found itself among Tung Yang's soldiers, and commenced biting every one who came in its way. The men

attacked it with their guns and spears, but neither balls nor steel could pierce its skin; so that after more than a score of them had been wounded, they ran in haste to the hinder camp, and reported the matter to the commander.

Tung Yang immediately gave orders that Sun Kèèn, and Le Tsze Kean, should go and seize the creature, but the two generals were obliged to flee, after receiving several wounds from its claws. By this time Chow Yung and Pang had come up, and advancing to the Chae they beat it to death with their hammers. Their bravery and strength was perceived by Tung Yang, who had taken his station on a rising ground. Astonished at their exploit, he requested the two men to come to him, and then, while they were kneeling before him, inquired their surnames, names, and residence, and why, being possessed of such abilities, instead of remaining concealed in retirement, they did not put forth their strength for the empire, and acquire honour for their wives, and dignity for their posterity. Chin Pang acted as spokesman; knocking

his head upon the earth, he stated their surnames and names. "We are natives," said he, "of this district, brothers bound to each other by alliance. Our families being poor, we have no money to carry on business, but are compelled to get our livelihood by hunting. We dare not cherish such ambitious hopes as to become warriors, and to get a name in history. Your excellency must excuse us for intruding on your presence."

The commander perceived that they were men of an elevated spirit and of no common order. "Since you are hunters," observed he, "you are perhaps acquainted with archery and horsemanship."—"We have had no experience," replied the two men, "of guiding an army, and arranging ranks, but we have some knowledge of the various military exercises."

The commander requested them to exhibit their skill before him, and, observing that it was perfect, he said to them, "I am now conducting this army to exterminate the rebels, and in consequence of your abilities am anxious to take you with me.

I will confer on you the rank of standard bearers, and retain you by myself; so that you may have an opportunity of establishing your merits. What say you to the proposal?"

Full of joy, they bowed their heads, and answered, "We will only return to our house, which is not far off, to acquaint our mother with our good fortune, and then come and follow you. Will you allow us to do this?"

"It is quite right that children should do so. I will, in the meantime, cause the troops to march slowly, and thus allow you to overtake us. Only don't delay, but come quickly." With these words he gave them thirty taels for the support of their families; and our two friends, only stopping to bow their heads to the ground, in expression of their thanks, ran instantly home, and informed Pang's mother, and the rest, of what had happened to them, presenting to the old lady at the same time the money which they had received. One and all were full of joy; and Wang advised her brothers, in case of their vanquishing the

enemy, and returning to the capital, to change their names, lest they should meet with some injury from the rascal her husband. Yung and the other told her to set her mind at rest, for they would know what to do; and then bade them all farewell, and proceeded to overtake the commander's horse.

Tung Yang instantly appointed them standard-bearers, and gave them the arrow of command. They accordingly took their stations at the head of the army, each having five hundred men under him. In all the districts through which they passed the magistrates came out to welcome them, and in a little time they reached the borders of Shan Se. The commander then gave orders that the camp should be pitched, and sent word of his arrival to the censor, Yang Yĭh Ts'ing. The latter almost leaped for joy at the intelligence, and having marshalled his whole army, threw open the gates of the city, and proceeded to meet the reinforcements. When he came up to Tung Yang, they conversed together in the most friendly way, and

proceeded hand in hand to the city. There a great feast had been prepared for them, and sitting down, they discussed plans for destroying the rebels.

"What is their present condition?" inquired Le Tung Yang.

"Their numbers," said Ts'ing, "amount to several myriads, all full of spirits. They have already got possession of Tsze Yang and Pĭh Ho, and are now besieging Yèèn Gan foo, which is reduced to great straits. Some days ago, Tsin Wăn Che, prefect of the subjected hèèn of Tsze Yang, sent me a letter, saying that the rebels were kept up by one Ma Wan Ching, a very bold and determined man of E Chuen hèèn in Yèèn Gan foo. Formerly, it seems, this individual, who is possessed of a heroic spirit, and is brother-in-law to Wang Show Jin, taught a military academy in Lew Yang hèèn. Having heard that Lew Kin was usurping the sole authority, and had driven Show Jin to drown himself, he was so enraged, that he resolved to march to the capital, and exterminate the Eunuch's party. While he was in this mind, he heard that

Che Fan was collecting an army under pretence of marching to the capital, and destroying the Eunuch; and giving him credit for these intentions, he joined him with his scholars. His real design is to cut off the villains that injure the people; and when he reduced Tsze Yang, he did not permit the slightest outrage to be done, insomuch that the people met him with incense and candles. But he has ascertained lately, that Che Fan is plotting to seize the kingdom, and slaughter the soldiers and people, and is not at all satisfied, but will submit as soon as our army approaches. Let us once get this man, and the rebels will be very easily subdued. To-morrow I will march to Tsze Yang with a single troop, and speak him well, advising him to submit. You can in the meantime proceed to relieve Yèèn Gan foo, and I will join you there with Ma Wan Ching, if he should submit. We shall then attack the rebels together, and there is no doubt that they will be exterminated."

Their plan of operation being thus settled, Tung Yang took leave, and returned

to the camp. Immediately on his arrival he gave orders that the soldiers should breakfast next morning at the fifth watch, and march with daybreak on Yèèn Gan foo.

Very early next day Yang Yĭh Ts'ing commanded, from his hall, that the soldiers of the right and left camps should arm, and be in readiness, and in a trice they all appeared in the field of exercise. The censor himself came to them in a little on horseback, and in complete armour; and having selected ten thousand men, marched directly for Tsze Yang. At the same time he sent word to Kin Hwa Hill to the Major-General, Chaou Ting Heaou, of his movements, telling him to keep firmly in his camp; but if any of the rebels should come his way defeated, then to issue forth and intercept them.

In a little time he drew near to Tsze Yang, and sent a messenger inviting Ma Wan Ts'ing to a conference. Before this, that individual had been informed that the Emperor had sent Le Tung Yang as commander-in-chief, and that the army had

already reached Shan Se. When he heard, therefore, of the approach of Yĭh Ts'ing, he deliberated with Tsin Wăn Che about what plan of resistance he could adopt. The prefect took advantage of the opportunity, however, to advise him to submission.

"Do you know," asked he, "what Che Fan has been doing?"

"I cannot but know it; but things have come to such a pass that I find it difficult to advance or to recede. What would you advise me to do?"

"In my humble opinion, your best and safest plan will be to go out of the city, and make your submission, when the troops arrive. Afterwards, when you return to the capital, you can act according to circumstances. In this way you will not only save the lives of the inhabitants, but prevent your own name from being disgraced for ten thousand generations. This is, indeed, 'to kill two birds with one stone.'"

Wan Ching signified his approbation of this plan, and instantly published a declaration of it throughout the city, inviting

at the same time any of the soldiers and people who might have any thing to suggest to come and see him without delay.

The inhabitants repaired to his tent in a crowd. "We are grateful to your excellency," said they, "for your abundant kindness, which even the shedding of our galls could not recompense. Since you have formed this intention, we will, as soon as the soldiers arrive, go out and submit, make mention of your benevolence and justice, and beseech the general to employ you, in recompense for the favours you have done to us."

Wan Ching, having heard this, prepared a flag of surrender, and told the people to wait within the city.

"His loyal heart was roused again to life;
He stood at once a pillar of the land."

CHAP. XVII.

"Boldly the rebel power the war maintained,
Yet easy victory the brave generals gained.
Their plans with little trouble were discuss'd,
And treason soon was trampled in the dust."

THE same day that Wan Ching formed the resolution which is related in the preceding chapter, and made the subsequent preparations, there was heard a confused noise of men and horses; and while he was about to send a man to see what occasioned it, he was suddenly summoned by name by some one without the city. The inhabitants ascended the watchtower, and looked round, when the great army was observed encamped about three le from the walls, the various weapons of the soldiers being piled separately in order. Beneath the flag at the camp-gate sat a man with a golden helmet, and incased in burnished armour, and on the flag was written in large characters,

"Governor of the armies, Censor Yang," from which the spectators at once knew that it was the governor of Shan Se with his troops.

They hastily therefore descended the tower, and hoisted a flag to signify that they surrendered; at the same time they threw the gates wide open, and the whole population proceeded, like a string of ants, to the camp. When they drew near to it, however, they were stopped by the guards, upon which they knelt upon the earth, and presented a paper intimating their submission. The same document also signified Wan Ching's intention to surrender, and contained many expressions of the inhabitants in his praise.

Yang Yĭh Ts'ing's countenance expanded on its perusal. He accepted their submission, and told the people to return quickly to the city, and request Wan Ching and Tsin Wăn Che to come and see him. This was no sooner intimated to these two individuals than they bound themselves, and proceeded to the camp, acknowledging their crimes. Yĭh Ts'ing, however, at once left

his seat, with his own hands loosed their bonds, and then allowed them to be seated. They both expressed their thanks for his forgiving their crimes, sparing the lives of the inhabitants, and accepting their submission, declaring also that they dared not sit in his presence. "I have heard," said he, "the people's praises of your benevolence and uprightness, and know you to be men of heroic spirits. Sit down therefore by me, and when you have seen the commander-in-chief, Le Tung Yang, you will be invested with offices which will afford you an opportunity of exterminating the rebel vermin. When we return in triumph to the capital, moreover, I will report your merit to the Emperor, who will appoint you to higher honours."

Having encouraged the men in this way, he entered the city along with them, composed the minds of the people, and then spread a great feast to reward the soldiers for their toils.

While they were feasting, the governor inquired who had charge of Shĭh Tseuen hèên.

"The commander," said Wan Ching, "is Chŭh Yung Peaou, a man of determined valour. He has also under him four thousand heavy-armed soldiers, so that our best plan will be to take the hèên by stratagem, and not by force. To-morrow I will lead my troops, as if I had been defeated, and deceive him to open the city to receive us. Your excellency can follow after with the army, and while I enter the city, encamp without the walls, and then, when you hear the report of musketry within, lead your troops to the attack, and enter. You can at the same time send six thousand soldiers to form an ambuscade near the west and north gates; and thus, as you will rush in all at once, there is only the south gate left for him to make his escape by. In that direction, however, he will be intercepted by Major-General Chaou Ting Heaou, with the troops that are encamped at the foot of Kin Hwa hill; and when we press upon him behind, and he is thus attacked on both sides, he must be caught." When the governor had heard this plan he struck the table in admiration. "A won-

derful scheme," cried he, "and to-morrow we will put it in operation." And with this intention they separated for the night.

Next morning Yang Yĭh T'sing sent Tsin Wăn Che to the north gate with three thousand men, and Lieutenant Chang She Yung with as many to the west, with orders that as soon as the gates were opened they should rush all at once into the city. He next told Wan Ching to proceed with his own troops, and obtain an entrance. The two lieutenants, Gŏ Yuen and Măh Shun, were left in charge of Tsze Yang, and strictly ordered to keep the gates shut, and protect the inhabitants. Though the rebels should arrive, they were on no account to move out of the city. All these arrangements having been made, he himself followed Wan Ching with the main body.

When the latter reached the city moat, he put on the appearance of having been defeated, and called to the warders to open the gate. This they did as soon as they recognised him from the watch-tower, and saw the royal troops in close pursuit, fol-

lowing behind like a swarm of bees; Wăn Ching and his men then entered in a body, and, advancing to the tower, put all the rebels in it to the sword. This done, they first broke open the gates, and then turned again and marched into the city, looking for Chŭh Yung Peaou.

At the time that general was drinking in his hall; but no sooner did he hear a great noise outside, than he knew some change must be going on, and instantly seized his fork, mounted his horse, collected his heavy-armed troops, and went forth. Just at this moment Wang Ching came up, and Peaou was about to speak to him, when the other aimed a blow at him with his spear, and wounded him in the shoulder. Peaou instantly raised his fork to oppose him, and they had exchanged about ten thrusts, when three different bodies approached to attack the city, on the east, west, and north. Alarmed at the sight, Peaou had no heart to maintain the combat, but fled off by the south gate. Yĭh T'sing and his newly-acquired friend followed in pursuit, leaving Tsin Wăn Che and Chang

She to search for any rebels that might remain in the city.

Peaou's flight was intercepted by the major-general, Chaou Ting Heaou. Having received the governor's letter the day before, Heaou was acquainted with his plans, and was holding a council in his tent with his officers, when some scouts brought him word that a troop of rebels was advancing in great haste, as if they were in flight. When he heard this, he armed, and mounted on horseback, collecting and marshalling his troops at the same time, to be in readiness for action. These preparations being notified to Yung Peaou by his outriders, he was so terrified that his soul left his body without its guiding lord.

> "Although his hands were motionless,
> His trembling body shook.
> No matter stain'd his guilty cheeks,
> But colour them forsook."

Seeing that there was no way for him in front, and that the pursuers were approaching behind, he looked up to Heaven, and sighed, saying, "My life is at an end."

With these words he called loudly to his men to follow him boldly, for if they could not force their way, they must die on the spot. He then dashed forward, shouting, with his uplifted fork, and Heaou advanced to meet him. The royal troops were many; and notwithstanding all his efforts, the rebel could not make his escape. Yĭh T'sing's troops also approached, and attacked him on the other side, inclosing his party, as it were, in an iron vessel. The fight, however, was maintained for half the day, from nine o'clock till three, till Peaou, all covered with wounds, remained the only surviving rebel. Looking round, and seeing his condition, he abandoned himself to despair, cried aloud three times, and cut his throat.

The soldiers then drew near, and cut off his head, which they carried to Le Tung Yang's tent, and hung up as a spectacle to the public, and a record of Ma Wan Ching's merits. After this exploit, the governor ordered Chaou Ting Heaou to lead his soldiers to Shĭh Tseuen, and there encamp without the city, to intercept Che Fan's

retreat, while he himself, along with Wan Ching and the victorious army, turned towards Yêên Gan foo. Che Fan had been besieging that city for a month, with one hundred thousand men, but without success. News was brought to him, however, one day, that the provisions in the city were nearly exhausted, and with great joy he ordered the soldiers to attack it on every side. While he was thus engaged, a scout brought him word of Wan Ching's submission, the loss of Tsze Yang, and Shĭh Tseuen, the disastrous fate of Chŭh Yung Peaou, and that the royal troops had proceeded to Pĭh Ho, from which Wang Keuen had sent a letter soliciting assistance. This report came upon him like a clap of thunder. He cried out three times, and fell down in his tent. The attendants approached to his assistance, and he gradually revived, sighing and exclaiming, "Truly Heaven is destroying me, for when my work is nearly accomplished, my left arm is cut off." He then summoned his councillor Shang Show Ping to his tent,

related to him all that had taken place, and asked what he could suggest.

"In such a conjuncture of circumstances," said the councillor, "it is of no use giving way to your feelings. You had better send twenty thousand soldiers to march day and night to the relief of Pĭh Ho, and when we have reduced Yèèn Gan, we can consult about future measures." In accordance with this advice, Che Fan despatched two officers of his staff, Lew Soo Kae and Le Tsze Shing, on the proposed mission; but hardly had they gone, when word was brought him that the imperial commissioner Le Tung Yang, commander-in-chief, and Le Tsze Yang, leader of the vanguard, were advancing with one hundred thousand men to relieve Yèèn Gan. Fan was thrown into great perplexity by this intelligence, and sent the messenger to obtain further information, while he called Shang Show Ping, and asked him how they should oppose the enemy. The councillor suggested that they should ascend a hill, and watch the enemy's movements in pitching their

camp. They might then find an opportunity to attack them with advantage.

Accordingly, they both mounted white horses, and ascended a lofty hill, to survey their condition. It was indeed true that Tung Yang's forces were approaching, for the sky was darkened with flags as rank deployed after rank. They halted, and pitched their camp about ten le from the city. Show Ping, pointing with his whip, directed Fan's attention to the soldiers in the south-east. From their slow march he concluded that they were escorting the provisions, and proposed therefore to the rebel that he should attack them that night, for if they could plunder the provisions, the enemy himself would retire without fighting, and, if attacked in the retreat, a complete victory might be gained.

Che Fan signified his approbation of this plan, and they descended the hill together. When he reached his tent, the general gave orders that all the troops should prepare their food at dusk; and after eating, arm themselves and be in readiness to move. At the first watch he selected twenty

thousand men, and sent them off by two different paths; Chang Show Ping being also ordered to proceed with ten thousand men half the way, and there remain in readiness to succour the others. Strict orders were given that they should advance to the south east, without either drums beating or flags displayed.

Le Tung Yang, as has been noticed, pitched his camp about ten le distant from the city, and instantly ordered his guides to draw out a map of the surrounding country. This being done, he found that there was one large road leading directly to Yêên Gan foo, and that on the south-east and north-west there were two small paths, leading one to the back and the other to the front of the city. Having examined the map, he hung it up outside his tent, and published an invitation to all the soldiers, saying that any one who wished to suggest a plan might come to his tent and make it known. After this had been circulated, the troops made ready their food, having excavated several places for the purpose.

After supper, as there was no business in hand, Chou Yung and Ho Chin Pang sat down in their tent. Being attracted by the gentle light of the moon, however, they gave orders to their troops to maintain a strict watch in that part of the camp, and, mounting their horses, went rambling among the hills; in a little time they reached a lofty peak, and admired the greenness of the mountain, both sides being covered with firs, and the scenery all around exceedingly delightful.

"On that side," said Chow Yung, pointing, "are the thieves. I am afraid some one may establish his merit before we have entered the field. To-morrow, if battle be joined, you must endeavour to take the rebel chief, in order to exhibit our ability."

While they were looking towards Yèèn Gan foo in every direction, there arose indistinctly at first a cloud of dust at the foot of a hill in their front. Yung instantly called the attention of his brother to it, and declared, from its moving appearance, that it must be the rebels coming to plunder

the camp. Chin Pang gazed at it attentively for a time, and then cried, "It is so, indeed!" upon which they both hurried down the hill, and went straight to the commander's tent, to communicate the information to him.

"We went out," said they, "to the hill in front, in order to spy, and before us, from the south-east, there appeared a cloud of dust rolling along. It must be the thieves coming to plunder our provisions. But as they are advancing to attack us here, there must be few troops and no leader left before the city, so that we humbly think the best plan will be to meet their stratagem by another. Your excellency can lead a body yourself by the small south-east path, to meet the attack, and leave Le Tsze Keang here to guard the great road, while we proceed with our own troops and five thousand men more by the small path on the north-west, and relieve Yèèn Gan foo. If we succeed, we shall join our troops with the garrison, and fall upon the rebels from the south-east, and thus prevent their van and their rear from

assisting each other. Thus, on the east will be the troops of your excellency, on the west those of the censor his honour Yang, on the south those of the major-general Chaou Ting Heaou, and on the north Le Tsze Keang and ourselves. The rebels will not be able to effect a retreat in any direction, and by this one exploit our work will be completed. This plan we submit to your excellency's consideration.

"To surely catch the tiger fierce,
We hide the bended bow;
The scented bait is well prepared,
To take the golden Gŏ."

CHAP. XVIII.

" 'Tis vain for man to vex his mind,
Possess'd with fortune's lust;
The dream of death comes o'er him soon,
And changes him to dust.
We think not grass upon the wall
Will last a thousand years;
As vain the record which the tomb
A century uprears!"

THE plan proposed in the conclusion of last chapter by Chow Yung and Ho Chin Pang filled the commander with joy. He clapped his hands, and cried in admiration, "A wonderful scheme!" and instantly gave orders that all the troops should hold themselves in readiness for action.

This was no sooner communicated throughout the camp, than all the officers assembled. The two proposers of the plan were then despatched with five thousand men, Tung Yang telling them to be careful, and that if successful they should be placed

at the very top of the list of merit. They accordingly proceeded first to their own encampments, to carry with them their own troops also, and then marched towards the city by the private way on the north-west.

After they were gone, Tung Yang caused the provisions to be moved to the centre of the camp, and, guarded by Sim Keen Ching with thirty thousand men, encamped at a distance of two le from the road. These were all to keep quite still, unless the rebels came upon them, when they had only to discharge a signal gun, and assistance would be at hand. Four officers of his staff were then sent, with four thousand men, to form an ambuscade on each side of the road close by the camp, and Le Tsze Keang conducted a body of ten thousand men half way to the city, there to give his assistance as it might be required. Four other officers were also instructed to conceal themselves on each side of the small path on the south-east, with a thousand archers, as many spearmen, and eight thousand other troops, until half the rebels should have passed, and then to discharge

their signal guns, and attack them in the middle. The archers, from the rising grounds on each side, could prevent the latter half from advancing, till the body under Tung Yang's own command came up, when they should attack and pursue the enemy in concert.

Having made all these arrangements, and seen the various detachments move off, the commander put himself at the head of the main army, and led it to the entrance of the road, the lanterns and fire vessels being all covered with oil cloth, about two le from the camp, which was left empty, in order to deceive the enemy.

All this while Che Fan was advancing. Having passed the spot where the road diverged towards the royal camp, he looked round in every direction. All was dark and still, without the slightest note of preparation. Supposing, in consequence, that his plan had succeeded, he discharged a signal gun, and his men rushed forward at once with torches flaming, drums beating, and flags waving. But no sooner had they reached the camp, than they were received

with a discharge of signal guns, and an array of lamps illuminating the sky, and the soldiers rushed at the same time from their conclealment on every side in great numbers, so that Che Fan's soul fled from his body with terror. He urged his men forward, however, till he was alarmed by the report of guns in his rear. He then wished to retreat, but his men, being attacked by the bodies in ambush on each side, were separated into two parties. In these circumstances they attempted to make their way round the hill, but before they had gone a bowshot Le Tsze Keang was upon them, and they were thus inclosed in a circle of enemies.

The stars seemed now to sink to Che Fan's terrified vision. The moon also became dark, the Tow* turned round, and the clouds tossed about wildly. He wished to abandon the combat, but could not; he tried to save his life, but could think of no plan. While in imminent danger, however, Chang Show Ping, with the rest of

* A constellation.

the rebels who had been intercepted, succeeded, by desperate efforts, in forcing their way to their leader, and rescued him from the enemy. On finding himself at liberty, he plied his horse well with the whip, and scoured back, like a startled hare, along the path by which he had advanced. But in this direction he was met by Chow Yung and Ho Chin Pang, whose enterprise had been quite successful. On reaching the rebels' camp, they found it quite undefended, and before a man could move a hand they effected such a slaughter that the bodies covered the earth in every direction, and the ground was stained with blood. The enemy then fled in every direction, and the garrison, seeing that assistance had come to them, issued from the city, and joined the victorious forces. Ho Chin Pang ordered them to remain in the enemy's camp, while he proceeded in pursuit of the fugitives, telling them if the rebels should come back to retake their camp, to fire a signal gun, when he would lead his soldiers to their assistance.

Having made his arrangements, he and

Chow Yung proceeded to their own camp by the path in the south-east, and when they had reached about half way they met Che Fan and his defeated army. They immediately stopped the rebels, and engaged them, so that they were now attacked on both sides, and escape rendered impossible. Chang Show Ping, seeing their condition, climbed up the hill along with Che Fan; but even thus they could not escape, for Chow Yung, observing that the rebels did not retire, notwithstanding the slaughter which was made among them, concluded that the commander-in-chief was pressing on them from behind, and, giving notice to Chin Pang to keep his ground, led the archers up the hill, intending to shoot the rebels from the height. Quite unexpectedly, when he had reached the top, he came upon Che Fan and his councillor, trying to make their escape.

> "Men will not enter Heaven's wide open hall,
> But boldly press to the shut gate of hell."

As soon as Chow Yung saw them, he ran forward, crying out, "Stop rebels, till I

take your lives!" and with these words he bent his bow, and discharged an arrow at Che Fan. The arrow hit the horse on which the rebel was riding, so that the animal threw him in terror to the earth, where he was secured by the soldiers. Chow Yung then discharged another arrow, which wounded Chang Show Ping in the back of the head, and brought him to the ground with a shout. The soldiers also bound him, and Chow Yung descending the hill with the two, cried out with a loud voice, "Your general has been taken by me. If you will now surrender, you may; but if not, I will shoot you without mercy."

The rebels were in such distress, that these words seemed to them like the proclamation of a general pardon. They threw away their weapons, and knelt down in a body, expressing their thanks and tendering their submission. Ho Chin Pang then took their number, which amounted to above fourteen thousand, and having secured all their carriages and weapons, conducted them to the commander's tent, along with Chow Yung and his captives.

Leaving the rebels outside, the two brothers entered, and addressed Tung Yang. "Under the auspices of your happy fortune," said they, "we have succeeded in taking the chief of the rebels, and in causing more than ten thousand of his followers to surrender. They are now without the tent, awaiting your decision."

The joy of the commander at these tidings was very great. He requested the two victors to rise up and sit down by himself, and then transmitted orders, that the rebel and his assistant should be carried to the rear in cages, and carefully guarded there, until Wang Keuen should be taken also, when the three might be sent to the capital together. With regard to the large numbers that had submitted, he observed, that they had probably surrendered only on account of the urgency of their situation, and might occasion trouble by some sudden and turbulent movement. Chow Yung, however said, that he had a scheme in mind, which would relieve him from all anxiety on that score. The commander inquired what it was, and the other replied.

"I will now go out to these men, and counsel them well, and tell them to go instantly to Pĭh-Ho, to Wang Keuen, and pretend to have been cut off from his brother by an attack of our soldiers. They can inform him also, that Che Fan is very hard pressed near Yèèn Gan, and Keuen will certainly lead his troops thither to relieve his brother. In the meantime, my brother and I will conduct, each of us ten thousand men half-way to Pĭh-Ho, and lie concealed on both sides of the road, at the bottom of the Fei Fung Hill. Your excellency can also lie in ambush, with twenty thousand men in front of the hill, and send Le Tsze Keang with as many behind it. I shall, moreover, order these troops that have surrendered, in case Wang Keuen should do as I have supposed, to commence a tumult within the army as soon as he reaches the Fei Fung Hill, and to discharge a gun as a signal for us to attack him on every side. The rebel may speedily be caught, as also his men, while the plan will enable us to test the intentions of these ten thousand troops. It will be well also to

send word to Yan Yĭh Ts'ing, and request him to press upon Pĭh-Ho, and after the capture of Wang Keuen we can join him with our forces."

Le Tung Yang was struck with admiration of this scheme, and expressed his cordial approbation of it. He requested the two men to go and give the necessary orders to the men, and then to come and receive their own quota of troops. They accordingly proceeded to the front of the tent, and addressed the now loyal soldiers: "Heroes," said they, "since you have returned to your allegiance, all will go right. The commander now wishes to entrust you with a service, on the execution of which he will report you to his majesty, and obtain for you high offices and dignities. Are you willing to undertake it?"

"Since your excellencies," replied they with one voice, "have been pleased to accept our submission, we shall implicitly obey all your commands."

Chow Yung then acquainted them with his scheme so far as concerned themselves, and having charged them to comply faith-

fully with his commands, in order to prevent future repentance, he gave them a yellow flag, to distinguish them from Wang Keuen's troops. The soldiers immediately marched off to Pĭh-Ho, and the two brothers returned into the tent, when the commander furnished them with the number of troops which Chow Yung had specified, and made every other arrangement in accordance with the plan, Le Tsze Keang being ordered to rush from his ambuscade as soon as he heard a signal gun, and join the troops which were marshalled under a yellow flag. Shun Kèèn Chang was left, as before, in charge of the provisions and baggage.

When the soldiers had reached Pĭh-Ho, as Yung commanded them, they called aloud to open the gate, which the warders instantly reported to Wang Keuen. The general having ascended the watch-tower, and recognized them as troops belonging to his own party, ordered them to be admitted. He then inquired the reason of their coming, and they repeated the story which Chow Yung had told them, which Keuen

had no sooner heard than he marshalled twenty thousand men to follow the newly arrived body to the relief of his brother, and took the command of them himself, leaving two of his officers in charge of the city. As soon as they arrived in front of Fei Fung Hill, his vanguard discharged a signal gun, raised a yellow flag, and turned upon the army that followed them. At the same moment the royal troops rushed from their concealment in every direction, and surrounded the rebels. Keuen, seeing the state of affairs, wanted to fly, but was observed by Ho Chin Pang, who was engaged in the foremost ranks. Summoning all his energies for the combat, that hero dashed through the circle, and advanced to take the rebel, which the other no sooner observed than he fled. Pang, however, was not to be baffled. He followed quickly in pursuit, and succeeded in wounding Keuen's right thigh with his spear. The rebel fell from his horse in terror, and ran off, notwithstanding the pain which he felt. Chin Pang also dismounted, and pursued him. They fought together for about ten minutes,

but Keuen was unable to get the victory on account of his wound. Pang succeeded in taking him, and having bound him with a bridle, led him to the front of the army.

The rebels, seeing that all their leaders were taken, instantly knelt down, and begged to be allowed to surrender. Tung Yang yielded his permission, and after appointing some officers to take their number, separated them into different bodies, and stationed them in the several camps in order to guard against contingencies. This matter settled, he advanced with all his troops to Ho Pĭh hèèn.

The commander and Yang Yĭh Ts'ing met in the neighbourhood of the city, and having joined their forces, commenced to besiege it. They maintained such a strict blockade, that even a drop of water could not pass through their lines. At the same time they made repeated attacks upon the walls, so that the two officers in charge of them were thrown into consternation. Observing from the watch-tower the force of the royal troops, they concluded that the garrison, though several thousand strong,

could not hold out against them. They therefore consulted together, wishing to surrender the city, but afraid that the Emperor would not receive them. In the midst of their hesitation there approached a body of soldiers, marshalled under a yellow flag with the words "Soldiers that have surrendered" written on it in large characters. Some of these called to the two officers to come out and surrender, for if they did not, they would have to repent their obstinacy.

"One day's defeat plunged them in deep suspense,
They wish'd to yield, and mercy supplicate."

CHAP. XIX.

THE commanders of the garrison, hearing themselves addressed in the way we have related by those who were lately their own partizans, felt assured that they themselves would also be pardoned on submission, and accordingly they threw open the gates and went forth. On their bended knees they made their approach to Le Tung Yang, who forthwith proceeded to the city. His first step was to number the inhabitants, and to publish a proclamation to prevent their being alarmed, and afterwards he enrolled the surnames of all the rebels who had surrendered, in a volume, that he might present them to the Emperor on his return to the capital. This done, he rewarded the labours of the soldiers with a great feast.

In the order of merit Ho Chin Pang and Chow Yung ranked first, and next to them

came Ma Wan Ching. The list was long, containing all that had distinguished themselves, and also the rebels who had afterwards fought under the yellow flag.

While they were feasting, the commander-in-chief related the plan which the two heroes had proposed to Yang Yĭh Ts'ing Ma Wan Ching; but when Chow Yung saw him enter his name and surname in the list, the advice which Wang had given him occurred to his memory. He rose from his seat therefore, and kneeling down before Tung Yang, requested him to change his name and surname. The other inquired the reason, and Yung told him minutely the history of Kin Tŏ Gaou. All the officers were excited, and rendered indignant by the relation. The commander was especially affected, for it stirred up the sources of his own grief. He could not restrain himself, but sighed aloud, and abandoned himself to sorrow.

Yang Yĭh Ts'ing, however, observed, "Since Tŏ Gaou acts in this lawless manner, it is only necessary that I represent his conduct to the Emperor, and have him

punished. What is there in the matter to cause your excellency so much grief?" On this Tung Yang related to him the union which had been formed between Lew Kin, Tŏ Gaou, and Tseaou Fang, and also the message with which Leang Choo had entrusted him. No sooner had he finished than Yĭh Ts'ing struck the table with his fist in a great rage, and exclaimed, "Who would have thought that his little majesty could have been so misled during the short time that I have been absent from the court? I shall return and exterminate the thieves, for I swear that I will not stand in the court together with such villains."

The other officers observed loudly that unless he did so the empire would ere long be involved in calamities, when the governor replied to them, "My mind is made up; only have patience for a little, and don't let the purpose get abroad." And with these words he turned to Chow Yung and Ho Chin Pang, and told them not to be afraid, for that he would support them.

The feast was soon after concluded, and the officers separated to their respective

tents for the night, Tung Yang giving orders that the prisoners should be carefully guarded. Next morning Yang Yĭh Ts'ing sent to the governors of the other province, and obtained in all eight memorials to his majesty, accusing Lew Kin of awakening dissatisfaction among the people, and causing those insurrectionary movements in the borders by his oppressive measures, and requesting consequently that he might be punished according to the laws. When he had secured all these, the governor sent an order to the major-general, Chaou Ting Heaou, intrusting him for a time with his own government, and telling him to appoint in the mean time the expectant literati to the charge of the various hèèn, to await the Emperor's decision. He also despatched several bodies of troops to the various passes, to follow up his success against the rebels, and guard against future disturbances. After these arrangements had been made he collected the troops, and, along with Le Tung Yang, led them back in triumph to the capital. As they passed by Yèèn Gan the prefect came out to

meet them, and received strict orders from Yĭh Ts'ing to be on his guard against the remains of the rebels. The officer having knocked his head on the ground in token of obedience, they marched on to the camp of Sun Keen Chung, and after examining the state of the provisions, ordered the camp to be raised, and all the troops to join the march. The army presented an imposing spectacle, the spears and swords dazzling the eyes, the helmets and other armour all fresh and bright, and songs of triumph resounding along the way.

Their approach being speedily notified to the Six Boards, Leang Choo, on receiving the information, entered the palace, and acquainted the Emperor that the censor Yang Yĭh Ts'ing, and the commander-in-chief Le Tung Yang, were returning in triumph, and were indeed close at hand. His majesty's countenance expressed the liveliest joy at the intelligence; but such was not the case with Lew Kin. Yang Yĭh Ts'ing and Wang Show Jin had always been objects of envy to the Eunuch, and the news of the former's return threw him into great

consternation. Thinking, however, that with Tŏ Gaou to back him he was sufficiently secure, he merely requested leave of absence, on pretence of sickness, and returned home; but his movement was perceived and understood by the guardian. When he was gone the Emperor issued a decree that all the officers, civil and military, should go out of the city to meet the conquerors, and Leang Choo instantly left the palace bearing this decree in his hands. Having assembled all the officers, he proceeded forth with them as enjoined.

Yang Yĭh Ts'ing, being informed by those in front of this procession, ordered the troops to form in two lines, and advanced forward along with Yung to meet it. After exchanging civilities with the officers they left Le Tsze Keang with Chow Yung and Ho Chin Pang in charge of the army, with orders to remain encamped without the city till they received orders from the Emperor, and then went forward to obtain an audience of his majesty.

After the various ceremonies had been performed, Ching Tĭh, addressing himself

to the two conquerors, observed, "I gave you a joint commission to destroy the rebels; what has been your success?"

"Under the happy auspices of our lord," said Tung Yang, "our enterprise has been successful, and we have moreover taken alive the rebel chief, Wang Che Fan, and his brother, Wang Keuen. We have brought them to the capital, and they now await your majesty's decision as to their fate. We have also with us, awaiting your orders, more than 30,400 of the rebels who surrendered."

The Emperor forthwith ordered the president of the board of punishments to cause the two prisoners to be beheaded, and their heads to be hung up to the public view. The care of the rebels which had returned to their allegiance was at the same time intrusted to the board of war, and the governor of the five camps was ordered to distribute the royal army among them as before, until his majesty should have examined the lists of merit, and bestowed rewards and promotions accordingly.

The three officers instantly took their

leave to carry these orders into execution; and when they had brought back word that they had done so, the audience was concluded, and each officer returned to his own residence; Tung Yang sending for Chow Yung and Ho Chin Pang to remain with him till the decree for their promotion should be issued, and Yang Yïh Ts'ing doing the same by Ma Wan Ching.

Next morning his majesty summoned the four principal officers in the expedition and Leang Choo to a feast in the palace. The summons was instantly complied with; and when the pearly wine had circulated several times, Le Tung Yang presented the list of merit. The Emperor looked over it with his dragon eyes, and observing that Ho Chin Pang and Chow Yung occupied the first place, he asked, "Who are these two men?"

Tung Yang, at this question, advanced from his seat, and said, "The story of these two men, about whom your majesty inquires, may well excite our indignation," and with this he ran over Tŏ Gaou's history; his union with Lew Kin and Tseaou

Fang; his deception of the Emperor, and attempts to injure his wife; Wang's escape through the righteousness of Seaou Lèèn, their pursuit by Gaou, their rescue by Chow Yang and Ho Chin Pang; the alliance of the former with Gaou; and the circumstances which had led the two to join his army on the march, and their subsequent merits.

When the commander had completed his narrative, the Emperor merely said, "It is not possible that Tŏ Gaou should be so wild and wicked."

"If your majesty does not believe this account," observed the other officers, "the two men are now in the court. You had better call them, and learn from themselves the various incidents, from first to last."

The young monarch accordingly transmitted an order summoning Chow Yung and his friend to his presence. The two heroes repaired instantly to the palace, and kneeling before the golden steps, hailed the Emperor as the Lord of Ten Thousand Years. After this they inquired for what

purpose he had summoned such mean individuals as them to his presence.

The Emperor opened his golden mouth, and replied: "I have seen you mentioned in the list of merit as having distinguished yourselves beyond all others." With these words he told Chow Yung to hear his promotion, and designated him the Great General, Corrector of the West. Ho Chin Pang was also entitled, Great Superintendent, Exterminator of Thieves. The Emperor then told them to rise up and be seated; but the two nobles first gave thanks for the imperial favour, and then paid their respects to the assembled dignities. It was not till they had done this, that they sat down in the lowest seats.

When they were seated his majesty told them to give him a particular account of Tŏ Gaou's improper conduct, on which Chow Yung left his seat, and related every thing from beginning to end. When he had concluded, the Emperor said, "Since they act in this lawless way, wait until they present themselves in the hall of audience, and I will severely reprove them."

Yang Yih Ts'ing changed colour at the weakness displayed in this speech, Addressing himself to the Emperor, he said, "My lord, you are entirely devoted to these men, and therefore blindly indulge them in their practices. Since I received your orders to proceed to the protection of the borders, I have heard that these court-waiters have been guilty of six crimes, for every one of which they ought to be beheaded. Nothing but the confusion occasioned by the rebellious vermin prevented me from returning to the capital to exterminate them. I have often wished to do so, and now that I have found an opportunity to return, I swear that either they or I shall fall, and though the statement of these things should lead to my execution, death, in such a case, will be sweet. If your majesty do not think of your deserving servants, but trust and employ those slandering thieves, there is no middle course of action. We must be punished, or they must be put to death."

The Emperor observing his angry looks, said to him, "Since you say they have

committed six capital crimes, you had better state them slowly, and in order, instead of getting into a passion."

"How dare I get into a passion," replied Yĭh Ts'ing, "before your majesty? But hearing that you are exposed to the imputation of killing the ministers who have reproved you, I am willing to adventure my life, and lay the matter before you. Since you inquire why they ought to be beheaded, I reply —

"First, Because they have seduced your majesty by the exhibition of trifling plays, and disturbed and confounded your mind, so that the government of the empire has been neglected.

"Secondly, Because when the ministers entered to present a memorial to your majesty, the insinuations of these men caused them all to be reduced to the ranks of the common people, and to be bastinadoed, till some of the old and meritorious officers expired under the bamboo.

"Thirdly, Because they procured the degradation of Wang Show Jin, and drove Chin Ting Yung to kill himself.

"Fourthly, Because Lew Kin has built a private palace, where he is assembling bold spirits from all parts, with the intention of usurping the throne.

"Fifthly, Because the Eunuch, in forming an alliance with Tŏ Gaou, and admitting him to his party, has been guilty of deceiving your majesty.

"Sixthly, Because their partizans, distributed throughout every province, oppress and grind the people, to the equal abhorrence of gods and men.

"The whole empire is anxious for their destruction, and if your majesty continue still deceived, and do not punish them, your kingdom will be involved in calamity." With these words he took from his sleeve the memorials which he had procured from the various provinces, and presented them to his majesty.

Ching Tĭh looked over them, and exclaimed, "But there is here no proof, and without proof it will be difficult to punish them."

"If you want for proofs," said Yĭh Ts'ing, "they are easily found, for you

need only send men to Lew Kin's palace to search. If no proofs are forthcoming, our heads shall answer for our crime."

This proposal being seconded by all the others, the Emperor was obliged to yield to their wishes. He told them accordingly to set about the business, and above all to be sure they procured proofs.

The governor, having obtained a decree to that effect, proceeded with the others, immediately after the feast was ended, to Leang Choo's, to consult in what manner they should proceed.

"What plan can you suggest to catch them?" inquired he of the guardian.

"We had better," replied the other, "obtain an order from his majesty in the first place, sending Tŏ Gaou out of the capital. This accomplished, we must proceed to the house and seize every one of the inmates, large and small, and there is no fear of the Eunuch's not confessing his crimes. The only difficulty will arise from the 'dragon-horse,' which is constantly there. If that creature should be guarding the door, we shall find it difficult to

enter, and the domestics being many, should a hint of our object get out, confusion will ensue, and the attempt may terminate badly for ourselves."

Chow Yung was by, and instantly inquired whether that was not the beast which Tŏ Gaou had subdued. Being told that it was, he exclaimed, "Since he was able to subdue it, here are my brother and I; there is no reason to fear. We are more than a match for him in martial exercises; and on reaching the palace Chin Pang can lay hold of the animal, and keep it fast, while I enter and seize the Eunuch's partizans."

This speech filled them all with joy.

"In faithfulness and righteousness
They sought the land's repose,
And straight they found those valiant men
To slay their crafty foes."

CHAP. XX.

"Youth is the time to court the favourite gale,
For man cannot the flowing light assail.
Waxes and wanes the moon's cold pallid light;
Now bloom the flowers, now fade their glories bright;
Heaven's fixed course heeds not our fond regrets,
On vigorous action good success awaits."

As soon as the plan to seize the Eunuch's palace had been determined on, Leang Choo caused an imperial order to be transmitted to Tŏ Gaou, instructing him to proceed to the five camps with a quantity of gold, cloth, wine, and flesh, and reward the rebels who had fought after their surrender under the yellow flag. Gaou, suspecting no plot, immediately complied with the order; and no sooner was his departure notified to Yang Yĭh Ts'ing, than the Censor sent the decree which he had obtained from the Emperor to the board of war, and requested to be furnished with

two thousand soldiers. Having procured these, he himself, along with Le Tsze Keang led half of them to seize Tseaou Fang; while Le Tung Yang, Chang Kéên Chung, Ho Ching Pang, and Chow Yung conducted the rest to Lew Kin's. On arriving at the house they seized every one they met with, whether large or small, and had penetrated to the hall when they were stopped by the dragon-horse. The ferocious animal instantly leapt forward to attack the party, as soon as he perceived they were strangers; but Ho Ching Pang met him, and held him fast, while Chow Yung passed through into the inner apartments, followed by the others, in search of Lew Kin.

As they passed from the hall, they were met by the Eunuch, who was coming out to see what was the reason of the noise. Chow Yung clutched him at once, and told some of the soldiers to bind him. At the same time he ordered the rest to disperse in every direction and secure all the domestics. He himself advanced farther, looking carefully around, and discovered on one side

a door, with the words "Treasure Room" written upon it. It was locked carefully, but he succeeded in driving it open with his feet; and on looking in, he found that it was filled with an immense number of precious things. His attention, however, was principally attracted by something on a table, which emitted several rays of light. The hero approaching to see what it was, it proved to be an embroidered veil with the characters "Cloud-girdle" written upon it. There were also several lines of small characters, but Yang could not make out its use. He folded it up, notwithstanding, and having secured it about his person, came out to assist his brother, but Pang had already beaten the animal to death. There being no need of his services here, Yung informed Tung Yang of the stores which he had found in the treasury. The commander instantly led a party forward to the room, and gave orders that every thing should be deposited in boxes, upwards of twenty of which were required for the purpose. The gold alone amounted to one hundred and eighty thousand taels,

and the silver to more than eighty thousand. He then caused these boxes to be carried to the court, whither he himself proceeded with Lew Kin and the other prisoners, leaving the house securely sealed.

On the way he met Yang Yĭh Ts'ing, who had succeeded in capturing Tseaou Fang. The parties accordingly united, and went straight to the imperial presence, asking his majesty to try the captives in person. Ching Tĭh, however, ordered the three Sze to conduct the examination; and those officers, having arranged the judgment table, had Lew Kin brought before them, and told him to confess his crime.

"Of what crime have I been guilty," asked the Eunuch; "and what would you have me confess?'

On this Le Tung Yang had the boxes brought forward and broken open in the presence of all. Immense quantities of gold and silver were then produced, and tributary contributions from every one of the provinces. Strange and precious things such as were not even in the imperial palace, were there in numbers, and multitudes of

pearls, with the names of most of which the great officers were unacquainted. A very large assortment of martial weapons also being produced, the judges asked him what he had to do with these?

"Since I received the command of the imperial guards, I have had these in order to protect his majesty's person."

"Granting that they were to protect his majesty," asked the judges again, "why did you keep them deposited in that inner chamber?"

To this question the Eunuch could make no reply, and all present strongly urged him to confess, but without effect. In consequence of his obstinacy, the instruments of torture were called for, at sight of which he proceeded to make a confession in order to spend the time till Gaou could come to his rescue. On hearing the various particulars, the audience could not help exclaiming, "How could any one cherish such intentions!" and when he had ended, the judges left the hall, and entered the palace to report to the Emperor all the circumstances which had come forth in the

examination of Lew Kin's house and at the trial.

When his majesty heard the Eunuch's confession, he exclaimed, "Through my own blindness I have been deceived by them hitherto, but now I know my fault;" and with this he ordered that the prisoners and their whole families should be conducted to the market place, and there beheaded. With an order to this effect in their hands, the officers proceeded again to the hall, and gave the prisoners, amounting in all to a thousand individuals, into the charge of a body of soldiers to conduct them to the place of execution.

As soon as intelligence of these things was conveyed to Gaou's family, they were all thrown into the greatest consternation, and instantly forwarded the information to him. He himself was not less terrified, but he gave orders to the messengers to return directly to the house and tell his wife to marshal all the domestics with speed, make them assume the dress of merchants, and then lead them to the place of execution for the rescue of her friends. And

having made this arrangement, he himself and his attendants also changed their dress, and marched to the scene of death.

The messengers flew home and announced the general's orders to his wife. Yŭh Yung immediately put them into execution, and disguised herself as a man, proceeded at the head of her domestics, as a company of merchants, and each with a sharp weapon concealed about his person, towards the appointed place.

As she drew near, she found the spectators numerous enough to form a mountain, and a forest of swords and lances gleaming all around; and the order suddenly struck her ear, "The hour has come, unsheath the sword." Seeing that not a moment was to be lost, Yŭh Yung drew her sword at once, and with a desperate effort pressed forward, followed by her domestics. The soldiers in guard, having mistaken the new comers for what they seemed, were taken by surprise; and before they could recover themselves, Lew Kin and Tseaou Fang were rescued and carried off.

Chow Yung and Ho Chin Pang in great

haste led a thousand horsemen in pursuit, and while they were gone Yang Yĭh Ts'ing, enraged by such an unexpected event, ordered the principal domestics and partizans of the two criminals to be beheaded. The female slaves, however, and ignorant boys, he allowed to be carried home by their parents.

The two pursuers had almost overtaken Yŭh Yung when her husband came up with his troops, and engaged them. A sharp contest was maintained for a time, Gaou fighting with the utmost fury in fear of the arrival of other pursuers. In this way, now fighting, now retreating, the party reached the city wall, where the fugitives found unexpected relief.

The keeper of the city gate, Mŏ Tèèn Yuen, happened to be Tseaou Fang's brother-in-law, and Gaou had sent a messenger forward, informing him of what had occurred. He had therefore concerted with his wife Chin to assist the Eunuch and his party as soon as they should reach the wall, and then to fly with them. Accordingly he sent an inferior officer with five

hundred men to lie in ambush on both sides the way, outside the gate, and to attack the royal troops should they pursue so far. He himself waited at the foot of the wall, and as soon as he saw Gaou approaching closely pursued, he threw open the gate to allow them to pass, and advanced to fight with Chow Yung. After exchanging a few blows with that officer, he pretended to be defeated, and fled. Yung followed him out of the city, when suddenly a signal gun was discharged, and the soldiers in ambush rushed forth on both sides. The Corrector of the West, however, and Ho Chin Pang, roused their spirits to meet the danger, and after beating the three hundred men, rolling them to the right and left, drove them to flight. Chin Pang in a great fury seized their leader, and having dragged him from his saddle on to his own horse, he threw him to the ground, where he was hewn into pieces by some of the soldiers. Tèèn Yuen was also killed amid the confusion of the fight, and Chow Yung, observing that the traitors had in the mean time escaped to a great distance, saw that it was

in vain to pursue them farther, and led his troops back to the place of execution.

The officers who remained there were filled with indignation on hearing of the traitors' escape. They proceeded at once to the palace, and requested his majesty to transmit a proclamation, accompanied with their likenesses, to every province, for their apprehension. The Emperor, having assented to this, gave orders that all the weapons, dresses, and precious things found in Lew Kin's should be conveyed to the palace. On this Chow Yung advanced, and acquainted his majesty with the way in which he had discovered the embroidered veil, adding, that he was ignorant of its use.

"That veil," replied the Emperor, "is a piece of magic, and is called the 'Cloud-girdle.' It was sent to me among other articles of tribute; and if a man repeat the charms which are upon it, he can make mists his chariot, and ride on clouds. Since it has come into your hands, you can keep it."

Chow Yung having returned thanks by

knocking his head on the ground, the Emperor assigned the palaces of Lew Kin and Tseaou Fang to him and Ho Chin Pang. He also conferred on Yang Yĭh Ts'ing the title of "Kingdom-settling Prince," and appointed him a member of the government council. Le Tung Yang and Leang Choo, and some others, were presented with gold, cloth, and ornamented silk; Ma Wan Ching was promoted to be the officer in waiting before the hall of audience; and Le Tsze Keang was entrusted with the command of the garrison of the capital. After they had all and severally returned thanks the assembly broke up, and they returned to their residences.

But we must now proceed to trace the course of Lew Kin and his companions. After escaping from the capital they continued their flight for several days without intermission. At last Tŏ Gaou addressed his adopted-father and said, "As soon as our escape is reported to the Emperor he will certainly transmit a proclamation to every district, in order to apprehend us. To

what quarter shall we now proceed for our security?"

After reflecting sorrowfully for a time, Lew Kin exclaimed, "In my terror and confusion I had nearly forgotten him; the lord Chin Haon is my most intimate friend, and formerly he desired to unite closely with me, that we might together accomplish our purpose. Through his being sent to a distance, and engaged amid those mountain passes, I have been deprived of his councils. We have lost, as it were, the assistance of our wings, and consequently met with our present trouble. Had he been present in the court to render us his assistance, we should never have been ruined in this way. Our best plan at present will be to go and see him. Probably he will be able to suggest something to us, and we can afterwards concert other measures."

They were all delighted with this proposal, and ordered their attendants to direct their course straight for Woo Pĭh. In a few days they reached Haon's residence, and sent in word of their arrival. On hearing it, that nobleman caused the middle

door to be thrown wide open, and coming out to meet the Eunuch, he took him by the hand, and led him up to the hall. Lew Kin then told Gaou to come forward and pay his respects, and when Haon was informed that this was the Eunuch's adopted son he requested him to take a seat.

After they had partaken of tea Haon addressed himself to Lew Kin, and inquired what had brought him there; on which the Eunuch gave him a minute account of the former transactions, adding that he wanted to remain concealed there, but was alarmed by the number of eyes and ears which were about.

"You need not be anxious," said his friend. "Ten le from this there is a lofty hill, called the Rainbow-drinking Ridge. It is very difficult of access, and just the place for a mountain fastness. If you are alarmed by the number of people here, you had better retire thither privately. You can appoint your son commander, and under pretence that the Emperor is governed by no principles of reason, but persecutes his faithful servants, you can store up provi-

sions, collect soldiers, and purchase horses. Having done this you can then march suddenly upon the capital, avenge your wrongs, assuage your wrath, destroy the blinded monarch, and share with me the empire. If your provisions be not sufficient you may rely on my assistance."

The fugitives felt themselves, for the first time, relieved of their anxiety by this speech; and Chin Haon gave orders for a feast, further to dissipate their fears. At the same time he privately despatched a party to the hill to lay out and prepare an encampment, and to store it with all things necessary for offence and defence. From this time Lew Kin and his associates dwelt in this fortress among the mountains, and plied the trade of robbers.

> "The dragon driven to the sea
> Doth only change his form;
> When the chas'd tiger gains his hill,
> Again he spreads alarm."

CHAP. XXI.

"Learning how pleasant 'twas for one through Keang Nan's fields to jog,
The gamesome prince his servant begs, and follows him incog.
Changing his dress, full painfully he wanders up and down,
His wild desires ungovern'd by the importance of his crown."

After the departure of Lew Kin and his villanous associates, tranquillity gradually pervaded the empire, and the people enjoyed the blessings of repose. Wealth became plentiful, and the means of subsistance abundant, — far different from the preceding condition of penury. When his majesty had performed his duties in the court, and felt himself at leisure, he would enjoy the happy condition of his kingdom in feasting with Leang Choo and the other meritorious officers.

One day Chow Yung and Ho Chin Pang

fell into a fit of musing about the tombs of their parents, and the condition of their families. This gave rise to a desire to revisit their village, in the first place to pay their respects at the tombs, and in the second to bring their families back with them to the capital, that they might meet with them morning and evening. They accordingly drew up a petition requesting leave of absence, and presented it to the Emperor. His majesty having read the paper, observed that it was but filial in them to desire to return and visit the tombs of their parents, and therefore he allowed them a period of three months for that purpose; charging them strictly to return at the end of that time, and not neglect their duties by delay.

On hearing this Chow Yung knelt down and said, "Originally I lived in Keang Nan, but my father having resided in Shing King for the purposes of commerce, he removed thither all his family. Thus, after returning to Shing King, and sweeping the tomb of my father and mother, I must go to Keang Nan, and perform the

same duty to my forefathers; and I am afraid that the obstacles interposed by passes and fords may make me exceed the time which you limit. I beg your majesty therefore to allow me a few months additional. Such a favour will be regarded by me with no small gratitude."

When the Emperor heard Yung say that he would go to Keang Nan, a desire which he had cherished for his whole life was reawakened in his mind. He had been told that the scenery of that province was beautiful; and therefore he inquired of the general, saying, "I have heard that the manners and customs of Keang Nan are surpassingly excellent; is it true or not?"

"Keang Nan," replied Chow Yung, "is indeed the place where all things delightful under Heaven are assembled. Its hills and rivers and forests are all celebrated in the compositions of its poets, and its scholars vindicate to themselves the first place in the great hall. In splendid and beautiful edifices it excels the three capitals. In the productions of its soil and the wealth of its inhabitants it surpasses all kingdoms.

Its temples and monasteries might suffice for all the ramblers of the empire. There flourished the renowned poets and gallants, Loo Tung and Le Pĭh. Ladies with painted eye-brows, and robed in green, parade the flowery streets in rival ranks; the willowed lanes abound with the cunning tricks of bright teeth and beautiful eyes. Among the slaves are to be found such as Le She, and many a servant would be a match for the screened ladies of other provinces. Promenadings of the gods never cease throughout the four seasons, and its three rivers are covered with painted boats and galleried yachts. But it is impossible for me to detail to your majesty in a short time its various beauties and riches."

His majesty's spirit was quite intoxicated by this reply. His former feelings revived, and he desired to wander into Keang Nan. Finding it difficult, however, to propose such a thing, he resolved upon a plan, and said, in an easy manner, "The visions vouchsafed us by the gods must be without error. Last night at the third watch, I was warned by a divine person in a dream to go

to Keang Nan, and search for some loyal officers who should support my kingdom; and now that you have described it as so large it may well be supposed that such are concealed some where in it, and I am anxious to go and find them out. The only difficulty in the way was the want of some one to protect my person, but happily that is removed, for Heaven vouchsafes me the opportunity of your return to sweep the tombs of your forefathers. I now appoint you to protect my route."

When Chow Yung heard this proposal, he became instantly sensible of the imprudence of his former speech. Endeavouring to remedy it, he observed, "Dreams are not to be credited, and I beg your majesty to pay no heed to the one you had last night, but save yourself the trouble of wandering about. Moreover Keang Nan is a distant and uneven province, full of hilly tracts, where travelling is difficult. Have a care, my lord, of your sacred person, and accede to my advice."

His majesty however replied, "How should I shrink from trouble in searching

for worthy officers to benefit my kingdom. Wait until I have changed my robes, and assumed the dress of a merchant, and nobody will be able to penetrate the disguise. And moreover, with you to protect my person, there can be no danger in the undertaking."

But the two officers were still dissatisfied, and Yung again addressed the Emperor, "Your servant has heard," said he, "that a kingdom cannot for a single day be without a sovereign; but if your majesty wander into other provinces, who will administer the government? It is not that I do not want to protect your majesty's person, but when the matter comes to the knowledge of the Empress-dowager and the ministers, they will say that I have intoxicated your heart, and seduced you to wander abroad, and become enraged; and thus my brother and I will be held guilty of the most heinous crimes. I beseech your majesty to listen to my words, and dismiss this subject from your mind. If you are indeed determined to go, we will rather

die here before you than comply with your request, and lead your way."

Chin Pang at the same time came forward and seconded his brother; and the Emperor, seeing that they were so obstinate, determined on another plan of accomplishing his purpose, and simply observed, "In this case I shall not press the point, but remain here. You two can return to your home to-morrow, and I grant you two additional months of absence, but at the expiration of that period you must return to the capital."

The two officers were delighted at this change of his majesty's intentions, and having returned thanks for the favour that was granted them, retired from the palace, and repaired to the residences of the various officers to take leave of them. Having done this they returned home, and packed up their baggage, charging their servants to look carefully after their houses during their absence, and to keep themselves inside to prevent mischief. The servants having promised all this, next day the two brothers met to commence their journey, and

at the same time all the officers of the court, great and small, came to entertain them with a parting feast.

While these preparations for the departure of the two heroes were taking place, his majesty had begun to carry his plan into execution. When he saw them so obstinately reject his proposal, he resolved to wait until their departure, and then, having changed his dress, to follow them, and put himself under their protection, so that they would be obliged to humour his purpose. Accordingly he sent one of his guards to see where they lodged the first night, with orders to bring him word in haste. While the soldier was gone his majesty wrote a declaration to Leang Choo. In this paper he commenced by relating the dream which he had mentioned to Chow Yung, and then said that he had consequently assumed the dress of a scholar, and gone to Këang Nan. He would have assembled his nobles in the palace, and acquainted them with his purpose; but being afraid that his mother and the Empress would interpose some obstacle, he had pre-

ferred intrusting, by that declaration, the management of all the public business to Leang Choo, Yang Yĭh Ts'ing, and Le Tung Yang. These would be rewarded on his return to the court; and in the meantime they need not be in any anxiety about his safety, as he would be protected in his journeying by the Rebel-exterminating General, Chow Yung.

When he had finished this paper he gave it to a eunuch, telling him to deliver it after five days to the guardian Leang Choo. If before that time any officer, whatever might be his rank or class, should enter the palace to lay any thing before him, then the eunuch should say that his majesty was sick, and unable to appear in court, but as soon as he was better he would inquire into and decide the matter.

By this time the messenger had returned, and informed him that the two generals were lodging in the "Red Porch" porthouse. Overjoyed by the information, Ching Tĭh instantly secured the imperial seal about his person, and assumed the square head-dress and an elegant suit of

clothes fitted for a scholar. He next provided himself with plenty of gold and silver, and charged the eunuchs to keep a good watch at the palace door, and not allow his mother to know that he was gone. He added, moreover, that he would be back in a few days, and then left the palace.

At first he proceeded towards the porthouse very cautiously, but by the time he reached the outskirts of the city the day had declined. On this he ventured to lift up his eyes, and was greeted with the prospect of the "Red Porch" on a hill a little way in front. He mended his pace, therefore, and made directly for it. The faint light of the moon revealed a boundless prospect, and caused the whole horizon to gleam as if it had been glass. Rivers and hills were all within the compass of his vision, and the whole scene seemed far more still and pleasant than any thing his majesty had ever witnessed within the palace. Fanned by the breeze, and enjoying the scenery, Ching Tĭh proceeded on the road; and it was the first watch before he reached the house.

On his arrival he instantly knocked at the door, arousing and bringing out the landlord to see what was the matter. When that worthy observed that the new-comer appeared to be a gentleman scholar, he inquired whom he wanted.

"I will trouble you," replied the stranger, "to inform the Rebel-exterminating General, Chow Yung, that Hwang Lun wishes to see him. He will know who I am." The port-master accordingly went in, and informed his guest. Chow Yung and his brother were about to go to sleep; but as soon as they heard the message they were filled with doubts, and, going out to the door, recognized their sovereign at the first glance. While they were about to receive him with the proper observances, Ching Tïh made them a sign with his eyes, which they understood, and instantly led him into their apartment. Having first sent out their attendants, they approached and paid their homage, and then asked why his majesty had come there at dead of night.

"After your departure," said the Emperor, "I could neither sit nor sleep; I have therefore changed my dress into that

of a scholar, and followed you privately out of the city, intending to proceed with you to Këang Nan."

The two officers were exceedingly alarmed at this speech, and, kneeling down, intreated his majesty not to go. "We will protect you back to the capital," said they, "and not return to our villages at all."

"My mind is made up," returned Ching Tĭh, "and you need not waste your words. Whether you be willing to protect me or not, I shall commence the journey tomorrow." Chow Yung and the other, seeing his majesty's determination, and that it was impossible to check it, had no alternative but to obey his request; and no sooner did they signify their compliance, than Ching Tĭh's face became radiant with joy. "Rise up," cried he, "my beloved nobles, and henceforth while we are on the journey we must avoid all observances between emperor and servant, and address each other simply as uncle and nephew, in order that we may escape the detection of our real characters."

"How dare your servant be guilty of such presumption?" said Chow Yung.

"Since it is I myself who propose it, you will be guilty of no crime."

This point being settled, the two brothers returned thanks to the Emperor, and arose, and conversed together for a time, after which they went to sleep.

"Next morning they directed their servants to proceed towards Fung Jun hèèn, and in the course of three days they reached Chin Pang's house. As they approached the door Chin Pang addressed the Emperor, saying, "Uncle, do you remain here a little, while your nephew goes in to tell his mother to sweep the place clean. I will then come out and receive you."

The brothers accordingly entered the house, leaving his majesty outside. As soon as Wang and Seaou Lèèn saw them, they perceived, from their majestic bearing, and their dress, so different from what they had formerly worn, that they had gained high offices, and were exceedingly delighted. In the mean time, without saluting them, Pang and his brother advanced forward to the hall, and bowed to the ground before their mother. This done, they turned to the others, when the ladies inquired what

offices they had gained. On this Yung related their adventures from first to last, to the no small joy of his auditors; and when the narration was finished Chin Pang ordered the place to be quickly swept clean, while he went out to conduct the Emperor in, sending their attendants at the same time to be quiet in the apartment behind.

Having made these arrangements the two men introduced the Emperor, and conducted him to the highest seat. Pang then brought forward all the members of his family to pay their homage. When they had done this, his majesty ordered them all to stand up, and, pointing to Wang and Seaou Lèèn, inquired who they were. Yung having answered his question by a narrative of their history, Ching Tĭh addressed himself to Wang, and promised, on his return to the capital, to raise a monument to her. Wang approached his majesty, and, after returning thanks for herself, told him of the agreement of marriage between Seaou Lèèn and Chow Yung.

"Wait," said Ching Tĭh again, "until he has protected me through Këang Nan, and I will have you all conducted to the

capital, and there myself superintend the celebration of their marriage."

By this time Chin Pang had spread out a feast, to which he requested the Emperor to repair. Accordingly Ching Tĭh, and the two generals sitting with him on a lower seat, inverted the bottles, and quaffed merrily till they were very drunk.

Here the Emperor stopped for two days, telling Chow Yung to worship at the tombs of his parents, that they might proceed to Këang Nan; and in the meantime he told Chin Pang, that, as he had business here, it was not necessary for him to accompany them.

> "Life is the time to drink the pearly wine,
> For not a drop can reach the fountains nine."

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